

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League expressed "grave concern" Tuesday over the Vatican-Israeli accord, saying it feared that meant the Holy See recognised Israel's claim of sovereignty over the Holy Jerusalem. A statement issued after a meeting between the league's secretary general, Essam Abdul Meguid, and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) foreign affairs chief Farouk Kaddoumi, said Jerusalem was a "very sensitive" issue for all believers. The statement said the Arab League feared that the accord signed on Dec. 30 to establish relations between the Jewish state and the Vatican for the first time since the creation of Israel in 1948 could be interpreted as an approval of Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory. The Arab League said the Vatican's position on Jerusalem had always conformed with U.N. Resolutions which oppose Israel's control of the Holy City. Mr. Kaddoumi, in Cairo since Monday, said the main thing that concerned the Palestinians in the Vatican-Israeli accord was that it did not affect the final status of Jerusalem. Syrian Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam told Arab journalists in Damascus Monday that the Vatican's recognition of Israel was "unacceptable."

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King hopes PLO will rise up to its responsibilities

Clearly defined political course and coordination based on sincerity are needed
Choice should reflect the conscience and aspirations of Palestinian people

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Tuesday that the present circumstances make it imperative that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) choose a clear course of political action reflecting the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

"I hope that the Palestinian leadership would rise up to the level of responsibility so that it will be able to fulfill its duty and its major role on the road towards fulfilling the Palestinian people's aspirations," the King said in a speech to directors and senior officers from the Armed Forces, the Public Security, General Intelligence and Civil Defence departments.

In his address at the Royal Court, King Hussein said that Jordan was seeking coordination with all Arab parties including the Palestinians with hopes to protect Arab interests and the interests of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation. The King also reiterated that future relations between Jordan and a would-be Palestinian entity would be determined after the Palestinians gained

their right to exercise a free choice.

He said the Kingdom did not harbour political or territorial ambitions in the West Bank. The Monarch also stressed that Jordan would not sign a peace treaty with Israel before the other Arabs involved in the Middle East peace process reached agreements with Israel.

"We are for a comprehensive and just settlement that will include all Arab fronts," King Hussein said.

In a similar speech to military officials on Saturday, King Hussein warned that if the PLO did not revive coordination with Jordan by Tuesday, it will face the prospect of the two sides going separate ways.

Palestinian officials said PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat responded to the King's call and would dispatch a team led by the head of the PLO's political department, Farouk Kaddoumi, to Jordan on Wednesday.

In his Tuesday speech, King Hussein said that lack of coordination with the PLO "will not only adversely affect



Jordanian interests, but will also undermine those of the Palestinians."

He said that the PLO was planning to extend the Tuesday deadline he set by "one or two days" and "I hope they will comply by that date."

King Hussein stressed the need to protect national unity and voiced pride in the Armed Forces and the security and intelligence personnel for shouldering their serious re-

sponsibilities.

Following are major excerpts from the speech:
We will defend national unity with our lives and we will be keen on offering a unique example to others.

I have said more than once that any party trying to tamper with national unity will be my enemy for ever.

Despite the difficult circumstances and amidst questions about the present and the future, parliamentary elections were held in Jordan because we had decided and determined to proceed on the way which we believe is the ideal one and the pattern of life we chose for ourselves. We should the responsibilities together side by side.

We elected the elite to represent us in Parliament. Our democratic march is a true reflection of our belief in the importance of public participation in the decision-making process and shaping the future.

We care for the human being, whom we entrust with our hopes for the future. We are determined to protect his rights.

In the recent past I have talked about the peace process to which we are committed provided it is to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement and would provide future generations a decent and free life in a stable and secure future.

I have talked about this decisive stage, concentrating on coordination among Arab countries, starting with Jordanian-Palestinian coordination.

I have talked of my concern over the Palestinians in the occupied territories with whom we share their difficult life in their land.

This situation requires from the Palestinian leadership to choose and to define a clear course and we pray to God that their choice would reflect the feelings and the conscience of the Palestinian people.

I hope that the Palestinian leadership would rise to the level of responsibility to enable it to carry out its duty and its major role to serve the Palestinians towards fulfilling their aspirations and their full rights in the Palestinian homeland. We hope this leadership

would truly represent the Palestinian people and be in constant touch with the people in the occupied lands so that this people can be reassured that they have reached the levels where it can be truly said that it is representative of all the Palestinian people.

As to the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship, we are pursuing a path set by our ancestors and we shared with them livelihood as one united people in Palestine and Jordan and we are pursuing this course.

At this stage, we must reach a situation with clearly defined features, one at which we would know our and their rights and responsibilities.

What is offered now is either they be strengthened by joining hands with us, and we are ready to offer them every support as we always did from the start, or the other alternative; there is no need for me to put it forth.

Concerning us in Jordan, once the issue is settled, and I hope it would be settled positively only then, the option would be offered to who would

U.N. plans points along Iraqi border

KUWAIT (AP) — Armed U.N. peacekeepers will set up checkpoints along the Kuwait-Iraq border to prevent weapons or soldiers from entering the demilitarised area, the commander of the U.N. force told the Kuwait News Agency Tuesday. Major General Krishna Thapa told the state-run agency that Bangladeshi soldiers would man these points and search all vehicles entering the area from both Kuwait and Iraq. The zone was established along the 210-kilometre border after the Gulf war that ended a seven-month Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in February 1991. It extends 10 kilometres into southern Iraq and five kilometres into Kuwait. Until recently, the zone was monitored only by about 300 unarmed soldiers of the U.N. Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission. The 791 Bangladeshi troops, armed with light weapons, started arriving in the past few weeks to beat up the U.N. force. Gen. Thapa said Kuwait has agreed to allow the peacekeepers to set up four crossings over a protective trench it has been building along the border with Iraq. KUNA said the five-metre-wide trench was 500 metres short of completion.



Cabinet approves appointments

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Ministers Tuesday approved several appointments involving senior posts. In a regular session presided over by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, the Cabinet appointed Assem Ghosheh as director general of the Department of Palestinian Affairs.

Mr. Ghosheh, who succeeded Adel Irsheid, to the post, was transferred from his post as advisor at the Royal Court.

Mr. Irsheid was appointed minister of the state when Prime Minister Majali reshuffled his government. Mr. Ghosheh served as secretary-general of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources prior to being moved to the Royal Court.

Another appointment made Tuesday by the Cabinet was that of Dr. Ghassan Al Nadeh as secretary-general of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, succeeding Nassir Atallah, who resigned as of Jan. 1 after holding the post for several years.

Dr. Mufleh worked at the University of Jordan and the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) as well as in the private sector.

The Cabinet appointed Farah Al Hashem as director general of the National Aid Fund (NAF).

Mr. Hashem earlier served as inspector-general and advisor at the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment.

The Council of Ministers appointed Laurie Hlass as advisor at the Prime Ministry at a senior level. Previously she served as consultant at the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

CBJ lifts ceiling on credits for exporters

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Tuesday announced the lifting of a ceiling on fresh credits that commercial banks could extend to exporters.

In a statement carried by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, CBJ Governor Mohammad Saeed Al Nabulsi said the management of the commercial banks could determine the volume of fresh credits they could grant to exporters.

The move, Dr. Nabulsi explained, means that the credits that banks may extend to exporters are not bound by the general ceiling on fresh credits during the year as agreed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the economic restructuring programme under way in Jordan.

He said the move came as part of the government's efforts to encourage exports, and was adopted in light of "the positive changes witnessed in the monetary sector to conform to the CBJ's tendency to have indirect controls over credits facilities through the use of new monetary means such as certificates of deposits in Jordanian dinars."

Another recent move by the government to encourage exporters was the exemption of up to 70 per cent of exporters' profits from income tax. Banking officials said they had received a CBJ circular informing of the relaxed credit regulations, which took effect as of Jan. 1, 1994.

Dr. Nabulsi said the new regulations also replace earlier standing rules which restricted banks from extending

loans to not more than 10 times their capital and reserves.

In the context of credits for exporters known as packing credit in banking terms, the total amount extended should not exceed 90 per cent of the bank's reserves.

The general ceiling on fresh commercial credits set by the IMF for the year was JD 400 million — JD 335 million for the private sector and the rest for the public sector.

But the ceiling was broken as a result of high demand — the total of fresh commercial credit extended hit JD 360 million in the first seven months of the year — prompting the CBJ to introduce a series of restrictive measures.

The measures included the limits related to capital and reserves of commercial banks and the banks' involvement



Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi in trading in the Amman Financial Market.

Subsequently, the CBJ sought a higher ceiling and got IMF approval for another JD 60 million that could be extended during the last quarter of 1993 at a rate of JD 20 million per month. Banks which had already broken the ceiling were excluded from the addition.

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Rabin: Self-rule hurdles could be overcome in next few days

Kaddoumi says proposals should be enhanced

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin predicted Tuesday that Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) would resolve their latest political crisis in the "next few days" and resume talks on implementing Palestinian autonomy.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath were in contact all day working out a compromise for restarting the talks, which stalled over control of border crossings, Israel Radio said.

"In everything linked to the proposal to resume talks in Tabaa ... this issue is being examined and will definitely be concluded in the next few days," Mr. Rabin told reporters.

"We have an interest in continuing the talks, not at any price or under any condition," said Mr. Rabin, adding he thought the obstacles would be overcome.

Israel Radio said several political sources predicted that

the Peres-Shaath exchange was closing gaps and could allow low-level negotiations in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Tabaa to resume next week.

An Israeli negotiator said the talks could resume next week following a compromise offer made by the Palestinians.

"I have every reason to think that the negotiations will resume next week" following proposals which had just been made by the PLO, said the official who requested anonymity.

The talks would take place in Tabaa, he said. In Cairo PLO official Farouk Kaddoumi said Israel must make seven changes demanded by PLO leader Yasser Arafat to its proposals for launching Palestinian self-rule.

Farouk Kaddoumi, who serves as the organisation's foreign minister, was speaking to reporters after meeting Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa.

"As Palestinians we felt that we had to insist on certain points," said Mr. Kaddoumi

When asked if he was referring to seven amendments to a document drawn up by Israel at talks with the PLO here last week, he replied "exactly."

Israel has refused to resume negotiations on how to implement the Sept. 13 autonomy deal unless the Palestinians accept as the starting point a draft document which Mr. Peres said they had agreed to last Wednesday.

The draft covers joint control of border crossings from the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and sets the size of the Jericho area at about 60 square kilometres.

The Palestinians denied there was any agreement, and Mr. Mousa has backed them, saying there were several documents which were not final.

Negotiator Shaath wrote to his Israeli counterpart, General Amnon Shabak, on Friday saying Mr. Arafat wanted seven amendments to the Israeli proposals. Mr. Shaath did not reveal what they were.

(Continued on page 5)

Settlers move into Palestinian school

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli settlers moved caravans overnight on to a site on the Mount of Olives where a Palestinian girls' school is being built, police said Tuesday.

The settlers brought seven caravans to the East Jerusalem site during darkness and intend to bring in five more. Their rabbi, Beoni Eiloo said: "We are not creating a new Jewish quarter in East Jerusalem but expanding Beit Orot Yeshiva."

The scholars erected a tent at the site last October but the then-mayor, Teddy Kolek, slapped a ban on further expansion.

"We are pleased to note that the Jerusalem's new mayor, Ehud Olmert, is trying to apply his policies," said the rabbi. Israeli Radio said the settlers had the permits needed to install the caravans.

Thousands of Israeli worshippers prayed Monday at the western wall in Jerusalem's Old City for rain and at the same time against the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) self-rule accord in the occupied territories.

Religious nationalists, ultra-orthodox Jews and settlers came from all over the country

at the request of higher religious authorities to pray for "divine mercy over the dangers set by the accord (with the PLO) against the survival of the Jewish people."

The believers, who were protected by police forces sent to the area especially for the occasion, also asked God in their prayers to "let the rain fall" to put an end to the so far dry winter this year.

The prayers, conducted by several senior rabbis, called for an end to the "violence against Jews" in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The pious also implored God to "pacify the heart" of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin so that he would not implement the autonomy accord.

In other developments — the army shot and arrested a Palestinian activist of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Gaza Strip charged with the killing of two Israeli soldiers, Palestinian sources said Tuesday.

Mohammad Shbeir, 21, was ambushed in the town of Khan Yunes late Monday and shot in the leg, they said.

Two army reservists hitching a ride were kidnapped and

(Continued on page 5)

U.S. in contact with Middle East parties

WASHINGTON (USIA) — State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said Monday contacts were continuing between the parties on the implementation of the declaration of principles signed in September by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"We've had in recent days and weeks extensive contacts with the parties," Mr. McCurry said when he was asked if the United States was concerned about the apparent impasse in negotiations between Israel and the PLO. "We know that their contacts are continuing."

"We think it's essential that both the Israelis and the Palestinians remain focused on the main goal, which is after all the implementation of the declaration of principles," he said. "That is surely the best way to change the realities on the ground that both parties want to see addressed."

"What you are watching is a negotiation that's in progress that we are not a party to," the spokesman emphasised. "We are monitoring it very closely and will continue to monitor it very closely."

Mr. McCurry suggested the

two sides were staking out positions and discussing things in the context of their own dialogue. "If we are mindful of that and remember that ultimately these talks are aimed at implementing the declaration, we'll be able to measure their progress as we watch the negotiations in the days ahead," he said.

The spokesman said the United States is "moving ahead" with plans for meetings in Washington later this month with the heads of the Syrian and Lebanese delegations to the bilateral peace talks which are expected to resume late this month or in early February. He termed the talks with the Syrian and Lebanese delegations "preconsultations" and said "we'll be exploring ways to move forward on those two tracks and then we'll be in touch with all the parties about resuming the overall discussions in Washington."

The separate talks with the Syrian and Lebanese delegation leaders will focus on efforts to "reinvigorate" those two tracks and produce forward movement in their negotiations with Israel," he explained.

Israel expands Golan colony ahead of Syrian peace moves

Khaddam: Damascus turned down many Golan offers

OCCUPIED GOLAN HEIGHTS (Agencies) — Israel founded a new settlement on the occupied Golan Heights on Tuesday, less than two weeks before Syrian President Hafez Al Assad is due to discuss peace moves with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Geneva.

Housing Minister Binjamin Ben-Eliezer, who formally dedicated the expansion of the Golan town of Katzrin, rejected suggestions that the hundreds of new homes planned for the settlement would harm already stalled Middle East peace talks with Syria.

He said the new colony was part of a commitment made by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government to all Israelis.

"The government is obligated, above all else, to fulfilling its promise to all residents of Israel, to see to the security

and well-being of their daily lives," he told reporters.

Washington, which sees renewed Israeli-Syrian talks as vital to an overall Middle East accord, has long viewed expanding Jewish settlements as an obstacle to progress in negotiations.

But many of the Golan's 15,000 Jewish settlers, who share the Heights with 18,000 Druze Arabs, are members of Mr. Rabin's Labour Party and have mounted a nationwide campaign against "territorial concessions" to Damascus.

Mr. Ben-Eliezer, a former army general said once the talks resume, "the question will come whether we will give up anything and how much we will give up."

"As long as we don't get answers that guarantee our safety, I don't see any place for thinking about giving up the Golan Heights," he said.

Three Israelis stood nearby with placards declaring "peace with the Golan," a slogan used by the right-wing opposition to underline its determination to keep the Golan as part of Israel.

Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam said Tuesday in Damascus that Syria had refused many attempts to reach a solution over the Golan Heights and reiterated his country's call for a full Israeli pullout.

His comment was an apparent effort to bolster Syria's position in advance of President Assad's Jan. 16 summit meeting in Geneva with President Clinton.

The summit is expected to be crucial in reviving efforts to reach a settlement between Israel and Syria.

Mr. Khaddam did not elaborate on the contents of the

(Continued on page 5)

Middle East Watch castigates Algerian regime, opposition

By Elaine Ganley
The Associated Press

PARIS — Middle East Watch, an independent human rights group, has published a scathing report on abuses in Algeria, blaming both the government and armed Islamic groups while castigating Western nations for their silence.

On the verge of major gains towards democracy barely two years ago, Algeria "is now mired in a virtual civil war in which the rights of no one are inviolate and the democratic process has been all but abandoned," the U.S.-based group said.

Its report, "Human Rights Abuses in Algeria: No One is Spared," portrays the evolution of a system that disregards human rights in order to safeguard the country from Muslim fundamentalism. "Sadly, the regime has done little to distinguish itself from the... human rights disaster it claimed to be preventing," the report said.

The report cites special anti-terrorism courts and press restrictions as major sources of human rights abuse.

It called on the military-backed regime to void convictions by the special courts, ensure fair trials, halt torture and stop prosecuting journalists.

It called on the Islamic opposition to use all means to end violence and asked Western nations to link loans and aid to "tangible progress" in human rights and resuming the democratic process.

Nearly 400 people have been sentenced to death and 26 executions carried out in "grossly unfair trials," the report notes. This gives Algeria "the highest number of judicial executions in 1993 for politically motivated offenses of any country in the Arab World, excepting Iraq."

Killings more than doubled over the past year, with civilians "from all walks of life," including intellectuals, journalists and foreigners among the victims, the report noted.

Middle East Watch said armed groups and the banned fundamentalist party, the Islamic Salvation Front, share equal responsibility for

civilian deaths and failure to condemn killings.

Officials say about 2,000 people have died since parliamentary elections were cancelled in January 1992 to thwart a victory by the front.

"Middle East Watch deplores the fact that (front) spokesmen have sought to justify the killings of some civilians and, to our knowledge, have made no statements clearly condemning the targeting of civilians," the report said.

It said the banned party, whose leaders are in prison or exile, has "an obligation to promote respect for humanitarian principles" as long as it stakes a claim to political power.

The 67-page report provides a detailed account of the special anti-terrorism courts, set up in September 1992.

These courts "fall far short of internationally recognised standards for a fair trial," Middle East Watch said.

Anonymous judges, habitual detention beyond a new 12-day limit, lack of access to lawyers or doctors, and denial of speedy trials all combine to deny defendants due process.

The "broad and vague" definition of a terrorist or subversive act can include obstructing traffic in public thoroughfares, the report noted.

It quoted lawyers as saying safeguards against extracting confession through force do not function in the special court system. Defendants are consistently denied medical exams to prove torture, it said.

less than three years ago, Algeria's press was one of the Arab World's liveliest. It is now shackled, and "the pressure has come not only from the regime but also from those seeking to overthrow it."

The government continues to boast of a free press, but intimidates journalists with jail sentences, suspensions of their newspapers or manipulation of state-run enterprises on which papers depend, from printing facilities to advertising, the report said.

Journalists are cowed by radicals suspected of targeting the profession.



NEW COLONY: Israeli settlers Tuesday bring school site in the Mount of Olives in occupied Jerusalem (AFP photo)

Aideed aide claims reconciliation talks amid rising Mogadishu tension

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — Somali warlord Mohammed Farrah Aideed is holding peace talks in Kenya with his rival factions and there are signs of progress, a top aide said on Monday.

Issa Mohammed Siad, foreign affairs secretary for General Aideed's Somalia National Alliance (SNA), told Reuters the talks were between Gen. Aideed and representatives of the "group of 12," a coalition of factions headed by his main foe Ali Mahdi Mohammed.

"There are positive signs," he said. The talks were being held in secret sponsored by Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi at his residence in Nakuru, 160 kilometres northwest of Nairobi, the aide said.

But Mr. Ali Mahdi told Reuters in Mogadishu the warring groups had not yet made any direct contact in Kenya.

"This morning I personally spoke with the chairman (of the group of 12) in Nairobi and I can assure that there have been no talks," Mr. Ali Mahdi said.

However, he welcomed "this process of reconciliation with the SNA" and said he wanted to see it progress.

A Kenyan official said top government aides were mediating in "high-level consultations" between the feuding Somalis.

Talks between representatives of the SNA and the group of 12 collapsed in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa in December, Foreign mediators had billed them as the last

chance for peace. Since then Western governments have stepped up their troop withdrawals from Somalia. U.N. officials fear civil war will resume.

Aid groups quit Two U.N. aid agencies evacuated their Mogadishu offices Monday after a wave of new attacks on humanitarian groups throughout Somalia.

The U.N. Development Programme and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) emptied their shared compound two days after an unidentified attacker threw a molotov cocktail at a nearby building.

Benoit D'ansembourg, UNHCR field officer, said the incident might be related to a dispute between the building's landlord and armed guards who used to work there. It may be "a kind of warning," he said.

Tensions also rose Monday in other parts of the war-ravaged city. Machine-gun fire could be heard near the line that divides the competing militias of south and north Mogadishu.

And across town, outside the compound that serves as command centre for the 33,000 U.N. and U.S. troops in Somalia, Turkish guards backed off against a crowd of Somalis looking for work.

The crowd, which had heard rumours that U.N. jobs would be available, grew restless and blocked the main road past the

compound when the jobs failed to materialise. The Turks fired tear-gas before moving armed personnel carriers and infantrymen into the street.

"All of us are jobless — we're not politicians," said one of the Somalis present, 20-year-old Hassan Ali. Eventually, the situation settled down and the U.N. troops pulled back to their usual guard posts. No injuries were reported.

Somalis and U.N. officials alike are tense, waiting to see what happens after March 31, when the American and most other Western U.N. troops pull out.

Aid agencies, which often operate with armed Somali guards instead of U.N. military protection, have been targeted in a series of recent attacks.

Germans to protect pullout Bonn is sending extra troops to Somalia to protect German soldiers when they leave the United Nations peacekeeping operation, a defence ministry spokesman said.

The spokesman said the move was part of Bonn's decision last month to withdraw from Somalia in tandem with American forces, and was not a reaction to clashes between Somali clans or attacks on U.N. troops.

The spokesman said 33 extra soldiers had already joined the 1,300-strong German contingent in the north Somali town of Belet Huen, some 300 kilometres north of Mogadishu.

U.S. sees progress of exodus of Syrian Jews

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States said Monday Syria was keeping its promise to allow all Syrian Jews who wished to emigrate to do so and expressed optimism that the process would be completed within days.

State Department spokesman Michael McCurry said: "We have seen very good progress on that and the progress is continuing. We expect that all those who wish to obtain travel documents will obtain them in the days ahead."

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, who is to meet U.S. President Bill Clinton in Geneva Jan. 16, promised Secretary of State Warren Christopher last month that all Syrian Jews who wished to leave would be allowed to do so by the end of 1993.

He did not quite meet that deadline but a senior official said Washington was confident the pledge would be honoured well before the Clinton-Assad meeting.

"There has been... a sizable number that have been granted exit visas and we would just reiterate that we would expect all those who wish to obtain travel documents to obtain them in the days ahead," Mr. McCurry said.

About 850 Jews remained in Syria before the latest exodus began. American Jewish groups reported last week that about 200 had been granted exit visas.

Some 200-300 Jews are expected to remain in Syria, either because they are old or in ill-health or because they do not want to leave. Most of the emigres have settled in the New York area where there is a Syrian-Jewish community of some 35,000.

Israel has long regarded the Syrian-Jewish issue as an important human rights question.

Syrian-Israeli peace talks are expected to resume in Washington later this month, soon after the Clinton-Assad meeting. Mr. McCurry said Syrian and Lebanese envoys were expected in the United States later this week to prepare the negotiations.

On the separate Israeli-Palestinian talks, which have temporarily broken down, Mr. McCurry said the United States viewed their current difficulties as natural in tough negotiations.

NEWS IN BRIEF

100 Iranians return home from Iraq

TEHRAN (AFP) — One hundred Iranians of Arab origin who were seized by Iraqi forces in the first months of the Iran-Iraq war have returned home to Iran in the past month, the official IRNA news agency reported. Quoting an informed source in the southwestern province of Khuzestan, IRNA said some 5,000 Iranians of Arab origin were kidnapped by Iraqi troops during the 1980-88 conflict between the two countries. But it did not specify how many had already been repatriated. It said increasing numbers of Iranians were coming home from Iraq through Khuzestan and that permission to return was being granted after the "necessary interrogations." Most of the Iranian expatriates did not have identification cards and needed accommodation, IRNA said, adding that they were Arab nomads from the Dasht-e Azadegan region near the Iraqi border.

Guerrillas stage 85 operations

Tyre, Lebanon (AFP) — Guerrillas carried out 85 anti-Israeli operations in South Lebanon in December, in the largest number of attacks for a single month since 1988, police reported. An Israeli soldier was killed and two others were wounded in the attacks, which also left three South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen dead and hurt nine. Most of the operations were claimed by the Iranian-backed Hizbollah. The group, Fatah-Intifada, Police, in the southern port of Tyre, said most of the attacks targeted SLA positions on the outskirts of Israel's self-declared "security zone." In addition to using Katyusha rockets and mortars, the guerrillas also used Sager surface-to-surface missiles.

New Turkish-Cypriot regime takes office

ANKARA (R) — The new Turkish-Cypriot coalition government formed after general elections held last month, took office Monday. Prime Minister Haki Atun of the Democratic Party (DP) took over from outgoing Premier Dervis Eroglu of the National Unity Party (UBP) in a ceremony, it said. The coalition government of the DP and the Republican Turkish Party (CTP) of Deputy Prime Minister and State Minister Ozker Ozgur was approved on Saturday by Rauf Denktas, president of the breakaway Turkish-Cypriot state. "With the coalition protocol, we have formed a healthy and long-lasting government," Mr. Atun told reporters after taking office. The UBEP came first in the polls with 17 seats in the 50-member house but the opposition which had boycotted the heavily UBEP-dominated parliament before the elections was not keen to join the coalition.

Iran smashes 'pornographic' film network

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian authorities have smashed a "pornographic" film production and distribution network in a village southeast of the capital, arresting and convicting the ringleaders, a newspaper reported. A court in Semnan village found the defendants guilty of being "corrupters on earth" for producing videotapes of "illegal sexual relations" and distributing them to young people, the Kayhan daily said. Such a verdict requires the death penalty under Islamic law, which has been in place since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The paper gave no dates for the arrests or the trial, nor say how many were found guilty. Wealthier Iranians in major cities readily obtain American and European videos, and the Iranian press regularly reports discoveries of "depraved" material. Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, Iran's chief judge, said last year that those convicted of distributing illegal films should face the "maximum penalty" in order to "prevent the spread of destructive, anti-Islamic values."

Group calls on Iran to hand over suspects

GENEVA (AFP) — A human rights group here called Monday on Iran's U.N. envoy to hand over two Iranians wanted in Switzerland on suspicion of murder, and whom France last week refused to extradite to its European neighbour. The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) said Iran should return the men, who were reported to the Islamic Republic by France last week, if it wished to convince the world that it was not involved in international "terrorism." The pair, Mohsen Sharif Esfahani, 37, and Ahmad Taheri, 32, are suspected of involvement in the April 1990 murder near Geneva of Kazem Rajavi, brother of Massoud Rajavi, leader of the Mujahedeen, and armed group opposed to the Iranian government. In a message to Tehran's U.N. ambassador Sirus Nasser, IFOR spokesman David Littman recalled that Iran's representative on the U.N. human rights sub-committee, Mustafa Alaei, said in August that his country was "ready to cooperate" for "further clarification" of the murder allegation.

Turkish forces in Cyprus fired on

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish Cypriot officials reported to U.N. peacekeepers that positions of Turkish armed forces stationed in north Cyprus came under fire from the Greek side on Monday, the semi-official Anatolia agency said. There were no casualties. It said there rounds were fired around noon at Turkish forces stationed near the village of Madenlik across the green line, which divides the two sides. In the past two weeks Turkish Cypriots had alleged a number of shooting incidents by the Greek Cypriots.

Slovak minister meets Peres

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Slovak Foreign Minister Jozef Moravcik held talks with his Israeli counterpart Shimon Peres on reinforcing bilateral ties on arrival here Monday for a two-day visit. Mr. Moravcik and Mr. Peres discussed means of strengthening cooperation on economic, agricultural and scientific issues, officials said.

For senior PLO diplomat, visit home breaks ice with Israel

By Said Ghazali
The Associated Press

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — There was something of the child in the most Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) figure to visit Israel and the occupied territories as he bounded into a well-known pastry shop in Jerusalem's Old City for the first time in 25 years.

The owner recognised the man in the dark suit, crisp shirt and red tie as Afif Safieh, 43, the PLO representative in London, and gave him honey cakes for free.

But farther along Mr. Safieh looked a bit deflated in the maze of higher-priced fur shops and cafes in the Jewish quarter that replaced the Arab stores he remembered.

It was, he said, a trip of "immense joy and great pain."

Although the three-week

visit that is to end Saturday or Sunday has been billed as a private one, Mr. Safieh is the most senior figure from the PLO to tour the occupied territories and Israel openly.

He has made it a charm offensive aimed at Israeli officials.

Israeli politicians like Minister of Communications Shulamit Aloni, a leading dove, attended huge receptions. Mr. Safieh gave at his mother's East Jerusalem home or visited as he held court.

"We are in a situation of unavoidable coexistence," Mr. Safieh told his audiences repeatedly.

He condemned violence that produces victims on both sides — a message the Israeli government is always seeking from top PLO officials to help with the audience at home.

His talks were sprinkled with sayings: For example, that Arabs and Israelis should abandon "the dia-

logue by arms and will adopt hopefully the arms of dialogue."

Mr. Safieh did not restrict himself to the occupied territories, but also visited parts of Israel. His mother said the two drove through Tel Aviv, Safed, Acre and Tiberias. She said he turned down an invitation to go to Israel's parliament and other official places, stressing that the visit was private.

Mr. Safieh even ventured into extremely hostile territory — the Jewish neighbourhoods that ring Jerusalem.

Israel planned these neighbourhoods to anchor its claim to the entire city. The PLO wants the eastern half of Jerusalem as the capital of its would-be state, even though settlements have tipped the population balance there to 160,000 Jews vs. 155,000 Arabs.

The final status of the city is not to be negotiated until talks scheduled to start by 1996.

While walking through the Pisgat Ze'ev development in East Jerusalem, Mr. Safieh avoided confrontation with an Israeli construction worker who heckled him.

When the man yelled, "Palestinians will never get any part of Jerusalem," Mr. Safieh moved away, curiously wishing him good day.

With no progress in implementing the peace plan, visits like his are the only visible result of the peace process.

The original timetable of starting the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in December has been postponed indefinitely.

Implementation talks are snagged on disagreements over control of border crossings, the size of Jericho and security arrangements.

With the death toll in clashes since the agreement was signed Sept. 15 reaching 50 Palestinians and 20 Israelis, public support has

taken a nose dive. Israeli officials made encouraging noises about Mr. Safieh.

"When the average Israeli sees Palestinian middle-class people and hears them talking, he will no longer carry the same fears and stereotypes he has from watching a hooded Hamas activist shooting a gun," said David Kretzschmar, deputy director of the government press office.

Mr. Safieh left Jerusalem in 1966 for Belgium as an 18-year-old student studying political science.

Two years later he visited Jerusalem, where his family can trace its ancestors for hundreds of years, but was denied citizenship because he had not been there when Israel took its first census after seizing the eastern half of the city in June 1967.

Forced abroad, Mr. Safieh joined the PLO, first as a student leader in Belgium and France and then as a

"guerrilla diplomat," moving from one country to another in Europe and the Middle East.

He was not involved in any violence during the bloody years of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians.

He married a Belgian woman and his two daughters, Diana, 10, and Randa, 8, have yet to learn Arabic.

Although he expressed interest in visiting his family's pre-1948 home in the Beka'a area of Jerusalem, now a chic Israeli neighbourhood, Mr. Safieh said he believed making the peace work requires forgetting all that.

He said the ultimate goal should be a two-state solution, but for the moment the most important thing was to end the diaspora of people like himself.

It is time for Palestinians to have family reunions in Arab cities like Hebron, Jerusalem or Gaza rather than on the east coast of the United States," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30	Only
18:00	News in French
19:15	Le Journal de L'Histoire
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Too Close for Comfort
21:10	Panorama
22:00	News in English
22:20	"Film 'Till Murder Do Us Part'"

PRAYER TIMES

05:10	Fajr
06:00	(Sunrise) Duha
11:40	Dhuhr
14:26	Asr
16:49	Maghreb
18:11	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifiah, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637410
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 652526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

It will be partly cloudy and winds will be westerly active. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. Temp.
Amman 5 / 12
Aqaba 12 / 22
Djersa 6 / 11
Jordan Valley 11 / 20

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10, Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 99 per cent, Aqaba 46 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Makhlis Mazharah 820425
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 810359
Dr. Mohammad Al Izah 752971
Fino pharmacy 661912
Ferdous pharmacy 778336
Al Asena pharmacy 637055
Nawash pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636770
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shamsam pharmacy 637660
Nawash pharmacy 623672
Najih pharmacy 987632

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Za'ir (—)
Al Ouds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Youssef Harzallah 980705
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 611111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 199
Fire Brigade 192, 621111, 637777
Blood Bank 804228
Highway Police 843012
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605000
Price Complaints 661174
Water and Sewerage 661174

Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111

Radin Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 06-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 06-53201

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn. 64428116
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn. 644412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642352
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmouani 66417104
Shmouani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushrif Hospital 6672770
The Islamic, Abdali 66417103
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66416466
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77710103
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77811126
Army, Malaka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 174155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560
Al-Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al-Najma Modern Hospital 10798980

IRBID:
Firdous Basmal Hospital (07)275555
Groch Catholic Hospital (02)322375
IM Al-Nafes Hospital (02)547010
Aqaba:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-3, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00	Agaba (RJ)
06:25	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
06:50	New Delhi (RJ)
09:15	Larnaca (RJ)
16:35	London (RJ)
16:45	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:25	Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:00	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:10	Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:10	Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
22:10	Rome (RJ)
22:10	Agaba (RJ)
23:45	Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45	Rome (AZ)
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DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30	Agaba (RJ)
06:25	Rome (RJ)
10:15	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:30	Berlin, London (RJ)
10:30	Istanbul (RJ)
11:00	Rome (RJ)
11:00	Istanbul (RJ)
11:10	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
19:30	Columbo (RJ)
19:45	Cairo (RJ)
20:00	Riyadh (RJ)
20:00	New Delhi (RJ)
20:30	Larnaca (RJ)
20:30	Auden (RJ)
20:45	Agaba (RJ)
21:30	Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:45	Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:45	Beirut, Paris (AF)
06:25	Rome (AZ)
10:15	Beirut (ME)
10:25	Cairo (MS)
11:30	Sanaa (YU)
12:00	Jeddah (SV)
13:30	Agaba (RJ)
15:45	Abu Dhabi, Karachi (GP)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/400
Banana	300/150
Banana (Mukammal)	600/300
Beans	600/400
Cabbage	90/40
Carrot	240/180
Cauliflower	180/100
Clementine	280/200
Cucumbers (large)	150/200
Cucumbers (small)	280/200
Eggplant	200/180
Garlic	900/600
Grape Fruit	180/120
Lemon	150/100
Marrow (large)	100/70
Marrow (small)	220/120
Orange	300/150
Onion (dry)	380/200
Onion (green)	220/160
Pepper (hot)	240/160
Pepper (sweet)	240/160
Polio	240/160
Radish	150/90
Tomato	260/180
Spinach	200/120

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

Conference tackles education issues

AMMAN (Petra) — An educational conference held by the United Nations Educational Bureau in the Arab States (UNEDBAS) at the Jesuit University in Beirut discussed issues related to early childhood and elementary education, adult illiteracy, vocational training, as well as educating handicapped girls and women in the Arab World.

Maha Ghannam, coordinator of the charity societies in the Israel-occupied West Bank who participated in the conference, said experts and specialists from Lebanon, Palestine, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) participated in the conference. She said they stressed the need to support vocational training programmes and called for preparing radio and television programmes to direct people towards vocational education streams.

Ms. Ghannam said the participants also called for conducting a census to determine the number of illiterate people in the Arab World.

NAF helps, 1,006 families in 1993

TAFLEH (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) last year granted JD 322,428 in cash and humanitarian assistance to 1,006 families in the Tafleeh Governorate, according to Director of the Social Development department in Tafleeh Zeid Maghairah. He pointed out that the fund carried out social studies covering 354 families in the governorate, and that 242 families of these were found in need and considered for the cash assistance provided by the fund.

Mr. Maghairah said that the fund had supported 46 families to set up their own businesses, thus bringing to 202 the number of families who have received cash assistance to set up their own income-generating projects.

IBS to hold 65 courses in 1993

AMMAN (Petra) — The Institute of Banking Studies will hold 65 training courses and seminars in Amman, Irbid and Aqaba in 1994, according to the institute's director Adeeb Haddad.

Dr. Haddad, who was speaking about the institute's training plan for the year 1994, said the training programme was based on the actual training needs of banks, financial institutions and specialised credit corporations.

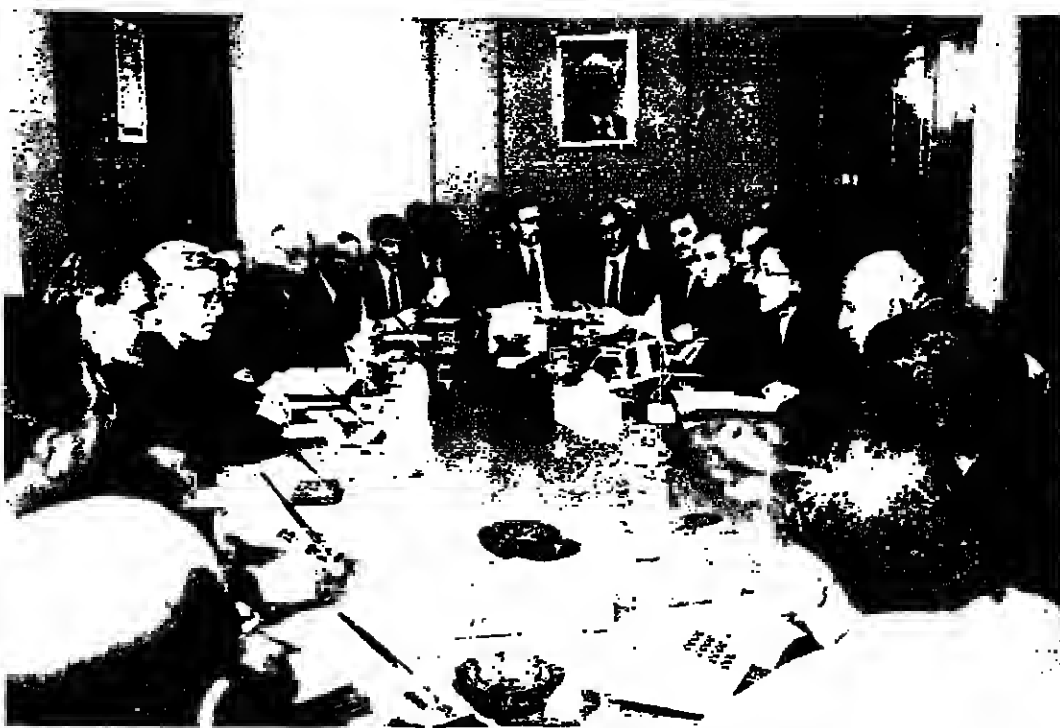
Dr. Haddad added that the institute has expanded its training services to benefit the staff of the Amman Financial Market, financial brokers, Social Security Corporation, Customs Department, Income Tax Department, money exchangers, insurance companies, Jordan Investment Corporation and the Orphans fund.

He pointed out that a special committee, formed in accordance with a decision by the institute's board of directors has finalised the necessary steps to transform the institute into a specialised university college, offering a bachelor degree in financial and banking studies.

Dr. Haddad said another committee, grouping prominent bankers and academics, was formed to look into existing training materials and develop their strategy to cope with the financial and banking developments in the world. The committee will also draw up the institute's training strategies.

Dr. Haddad said the institute held 66 training courses, attended by 1,015, during the year 1993.

The IBS was established in 1970 as an international university college offering a middle diploma in banking and financial science. So far, a total of 885 people have graduated from the institute.



Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf Tuesday holds talks with a Canadian delegation headed by Ontario Premier Bob Rae on economic and trade ties (Petra photo)

Khalaf, Ontario minister discussed ties; businessmen want a fair balance of trade

AMMAN (J.T.) — The premier of the Canadian state of Ontario, Bob Rae Tuesday held talks with Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf and said that Canada wishes to further boost economic and trade ties with Jordan.

Mr. Rae, who arrived earlier Tuesday at the head of a delegation on a several-day visit to Jordan, also said that his country would like to found its ties with Jordan on sound basis. Praising the Jordanian leadership's role in contributing to the Middle East region's stability, Mr. Rae said that Canada would like to see stronger economic ties.

Both the minister and Mr. Rae emphasised the need for developed economic relations and underlined the role of the private sector in boosting the exchange of trade between the two sides and launching joint investment schemes.

Dr. Khalaf said Jordan encourages foreign investments in Jordan, at any level and in

different forms, noting that the Kingdom was taking measures towards encouraging investments and opening the way for more investors.

She said the new laws or amendments to existing laws would cater to the requirements, of new investments in Jordan.

The minister outlined the current economic and trade situation, pointing out that the whole region remains unstable due to the political developments and the refugee problems.

Both sides noted that Jordan could serve as a spring board for Canada in the region. Canada's ambassador to Jordan, Andrew Robinson was among the audience which grouped the Canadian delegation and senior ministry officials.

Meanwhile, the Jordanian Businessmen Association (JBA), which is hosting a meeting with Mr. Rae at the Regency Hotel Wednesday,

issued a statement on the eve of his visit in which it noted that Jordan's trade with Canada as a whole was very negligible compared to Jordan's trade with the rest of the world.

The statement said that while Jordan's exports to Canada in 1991 stood at JD 94,700, it dropped to JD 20,700 in 1992, while its imports were worth JD 15,824,200 and JD 10,374,100 respectively.

Noting that trade with Canada could be promoted through the Jordan-Canada Business Council, established in 1993, the statement said that the adverse balance of trade on Jordan's side should be negotiated with Canadian officials.

The JBA, said comprehensive discussions and dialogues should be conducted in order to conclude fruitful results, as Jordan can be an important trade partner to Canada at both bilateral and regional levels.

Robbers seem to find railway beams a rare commodity

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ma'an police Monday aborted a robbery of wooden railway beams in Baten Al Ghoul area, in Al Mondawara, according to a police report.

Three people aged 29, 25 and 16 were arrested by police while attempting to dismantle the beams by using gas and oxygen.

Police reports indicate that it took the three men more than five hours to pull the wooden beams before they were discovered by police.

An official at the Ma'an Railway Station told the Jordan Times that this is the first time in ten years that someone tries to steal these wooden beams.

The official said the reason someone might think of stealing these beams is their value in the market.

"This kind of wood is very expensive because it is made to withstand all kinds of weather conditions and it does not absorb water," he said.

The official said the people who tried to steal the wood wanted to use it for building purposes.

"People who thought of doing it probably want to use them to build a farm fence or to use them for building a house because they are as solid as metal," he added.

This kind of wood is very expensive because it is imported to the Kingdom, he added.

Post office robbed

Irbid police are searching for thieves who broke into Firema post office, in Irbid, and escaped with JD 76, Monday, according to a police report.

The post office director,

Mohammad Rifai, discovered the robbery when he went to work in the morning.

Mr. Rifai told police when he opened the door he found papers scattered on the floor, the door of the safe broken and the money missing.

Preliminary investigations by police indicate that the robbers' was/were able to break one of the windows, then used a sharp object to pry open the safe.

According to the report, the only thing missing was the money. Police are investigating the case.

Body found

The body of a 53-year-old man was discovered Monday by Al Hashemi Al Janoubi police.

The victim, identified by police as A.M.B., was discovered in a deserted house in the Hashemi Al Janoubi area.

A forensic doctor who examined the body attributed the death to several knife stabs to the neck and stomach. Police are investigating the murder.

Rat gnaws child's toe

A two and a half-month-old Mafrag girl lost a piece of her right toe when a rat attacked her.

I.N. was in her family's house sleeping when a rat chewed at her toe and fingers, according to a nurse at Mafrag Military Hospital.

"The girl is in good condition now, and we gave her the necessary vaccinations so she doesn't get infected," the nurse said.

"The girl will stay in the hospital until she is completely cured," she added.

A Mafrag resident told the Jordan Times that the community has been plagued by rats which, he said, walk freely in the street.

"Rats are scattered in our houses and streets, and it is a problem we have been suffering from for a long time," he said.

The Mafrag community is not the only one that suffers; Ramtha and some refugee camps east of Irbid have had extensive material losses, due to rats too.

"The problem is that garbage is disposed close to our community and that is a good place for rats to live on and attack us from," the Mafrag resident said.

Officials deny ban on entry of Gaza produce in Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Senior officials Wednesday dismissed as baseless an Israeli Radio report that Jordan has banned the flow of agricultural produce from the Gaza Strip through the Kingdom.

"The report is totally baseless and unfounded," said Wahih Hussein, head of the agriculture section at the Department of Palestinian Affairs.

The flow of Palestinian agricultural produce through Jordan for exports continues unimpeded and "no such ban has been adopted by Jordan," Mr. Hussein told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Hussein as well as other officials described the report as Israeli propaganda aimed at creating trouble between Jordan and the Palestinians.

According to the Israeli report, the purported ban

was imposed because Jordan was upset with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) for its lack of political coordination with the Kingdom.

Officials laughed off the report.

"It is another link in the chain of the Israeli-orchestrated campaign to poison the atmosphere between Jordan and the PLO and the Palestinians in the occupied territories," said a senior official, who preferred anonymity.

"There is a political decision to support the Palestinians living in the occupied territories to the best of Jordan's abilities, and there is no logic in suggesting that we are adopting moves contrary to that decision," added the official.

Ministry of Agriculture officials said routine permissions had already been issued, allowing fruits and vegetables from the Gaza Strip to enter Jordan in trans-

it for export purposes between Jan. 1 and April 30, 1994, and that West Bank produce could enter Jordan without restraints except those in place to protect local produce.

As a rule, West Bank produce is allowed into Jordan for exports as well as to make up for the shortfalls in local production depending on season, the officials said.

There have been a few occasions when Jordan had no choice but to block the entry of certain products because Israelis tried to "speak in" their products disguised as Palestinian products, the officials said, noting that allowing such items to enter Jordan would be in violation of the Arab boycott of Israel.

Jordan imports around \$30 million worth of Palestinian products every year, including fruits and vegetables, meat products and olive oil as well as building stones, and does not impose any customs

on them, considering the imports as internal trade.

Nearly 12,000 tonnes of fruits and vegetables from the West Bank and nearly 3,000 tonnes from the Gaza Strip entered Jordan during 1993, according to official figures. The bulk of the produce was destined for the Gulf states.

Israel does not allow the export of Jordanian products to the occupied territories.

Trade between Jordan and the occupied territories has been an issue under discussion at varying forums and stages among three main parties involved — Jordan, the Palestinians and Israel — in the 26-month-old Middle East peace process.

But no definite agreement has been reached since Israel has been trying to maintain the occupied territories as a protected market for its own products while seeking to impose ceilings, tariffs and levies on non-Israeli products, officials say.

Cabinet briefed on Qatari, Egyptian ministers' visits; Majali urges field trips by ministers to governorates

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday reviewed the outcome of a visit to Jordan, this week by Sheikh Ben Jasssem Al Thani, Qatar's foreign minister, in the light of a report submitted to the council by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Tala Al Hassan.

Agreement was reached with the Qatari minister on the formation of a joint committee to discuss in detail ways of promoting bilateral cooperation in economic, political, informational and investment fields, as well as cooperation between the private sectors in the two countries, according to Mr. Al Hassan.

He said that Qatar and Jordan decided to reactivate television programme exchanges, to resume cooperation between their respective national news agencies and to also set up a higher joint council to look into future joint investments.

Mr. Al Hassan said that the two sides agreed on the need to stimulate the exchange of trade, expertise and manpower in education, petroleum industries and medical services.

The joint Jordanian-Qatari Committee is expected to hold its meeting in Doha in the first quarter of this year, said Mr. Al Hassan in his report.

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali outlined the outcome of talks with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa who Monday delivered a message to His Majesty King Hussein from President Mubarak of Egypt.

Mr. Mousa, explained Dr. Majali, discussed with the King three main issues concerning the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The first issue was related to the question of supervision of the crossing points between Jordan and the West Bank, the second concerned the area of the Jericho district from which the Israeli troops plan to withdraw and the third issue concerned security along the border dividing the Jericho area from the West Bank.

According to Mr. Mousa, the Israelis and the Palestinians failed to reach an agreement to settle their differences during the Cairo talks, but the Israelis have submitted a memorandum to the Palestinian side to be studied, said Dr. Majali.

On the Jordanian-Egyptian relations, the prime minister said that two sides agreed to resume meetings by the Joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee, noting that the next meeting is to be held in Amman, but no date has yet been fixed.

The prime minister reported to the Cabinet on his inspection trip to Mafrag Monday, where he discussed decentralisation and granting wider powers to the governors.

He also discussed the question of cooperation among heads of local departments.

The prime minister urged the Cabinet members to continue their field trips in various governorates in order to have a first hand idea about problems and needs.

Hammad: Only cooperation can help Arabs face challenges

AMMAN (Petra) — Interior Minister Salameh Hammad Tuesday called for enhancing inter-Arab cooperation and revitalising institutes of common Arab work.

Addressing the 11th session of the council of Arab Interior Ministers which started its meetings in Tunis Tuesday, Mr. Hammad said: "We in Jordan believe that there is no other way for facing the challenges posed by the current situation, and changes resulting there from, except through inter-Arab cooperation and revitalising institutions."

Mr. Hammad said Jordan believes that the security of any Arab country is an organic extension of the national security.

The minister added: "The security of any Arab country is

part and parcel of the pan-Arab security, which we all should safeguard with all the means and resources available to us."

Mr. Hammad called for formulating a pan-Arab plan of cooperation for addressing natural disasters and their destructive effects, saying that such a plan is absent from the Arab World. The plan, he said, should include clear methods for dealing with emergencies caused by disasters.

He stressed that Jordan has always extended its hand for cooperation with Arab countries with open minds and thoughts. He said that Jordan has taken big steps on the path of democracy, which it considers as the basis for security, stability and respect for human rights.

Symposium to tackle social security issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Amman will Monday host a three-day pan-Arab symposium on social security organised by the Social Security Corporation (SSC), and the Arab Labour Organisation, with the participation of representatives of workers, employers and governments in the Arab World.

In announcing the meeting Tuesday, SSC Director General Mohammad Saleh Al Hourani said that the symposium will discuss a number of

studies related to pan-Arab strategy in social security affairs, social security concepts in Islam developing systems governing social security, case studies from the Arab states and other matters.

He said that ways to promote relation to cooperation between social security organisations in the Arab World and the Geneva-based International Social Security Association will also be discussed.

Jordan, IMF finalise 1994 standby accord

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have finalised a standby agreement for the year 1994 as part of the economic restructuring programme the Kingdom is following since 1989, informed sources said Tuesday.

They said the main undertaking in the agreement was the introduction of a sales tax to replace a consumption tax before the end of next month and a reaffirmation of the Kingdom's moves to revamp the energy sector to make it cost-efficient.

The sources said no price increase of any commodity or fuel was envisaged in the letter of intent Jordan submitted to the IMF on the basis of which the standby agreement was finalised. The sources could not say whether the agreement was actually signed by the finance minister.

The accord now goes before the board of governors of the IMF and, immediately after approval, clears the way for Jordan to open fresh debt rescheduling talks with the Paris Club of creditor governments in February.

An IMF certification that a debtor country is following an economic restructuring programme is essential before international creditors agree to hold debt rescheduling talks.

The IMF green signal for Jordan will also clear the way for the Kingdom to seek external financing to service its debts, estimated to cost around \$400 million. The financing is expected to be raised with help from the World Bank, which convened a donors conference which produced \$390 million in assistance to Jordan for the year 1993.

According to the sources, apart from undertaking to introduce the sales tax, the government renewed its commitment to ensuring that the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) would be self-sufficient by the year 1995.

To achieve this end by improving the performance of the semi-autonomous JEA and developing the energy sector in general, the World Bank has extended an \$80 million loan supported by a matching loan from the Japanese government.

"No other major measures are envisaged in the standby agreement other than reaffirmation of Jordan's economic targets as set out in the restructuring programme," said a source familiar with the negotiations that led to the finalisation of the document.

The source noted that Jordan has already complied with the IMF requirements of raising fuel prices and reducing subsidies among other measures envisaged in the economic restructuring programme.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Majali receives former Lebanese premier

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali Tuesday received at the Prime Ministry former Lebanese Premier Amin Al Hafez who is currently on a private visit to Jordan. Mr. Hafez was Monday received by His Majesty King Hussein.

Lawzi confers with Algerian envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi Tuesday received at the Parliament Algerian Ambassador to Jordan Al Hashemi Al Qaddouri. The two discussed Jordanian-Algerian relations and issues of common interest.

Tawjilhi papers to be marked on Jan. 9

AMMAN (Petra) — The process of correcting and marking examination papers of the general secondary examination certificate (tawjilhi) will start in Amman and Irbid next Sunday, Jan. 9, one day after the end of the examinations, an official source at the ministry said Tuesday. The sources called on teachers participating in the process to head for the halls assigned by the ministry for this purpose despite the fact that Sunday will be a public holiday in observance of the Israa and Mi'raj anniversary. The correction halls in Amman total 13 and in Irbid 10. Some 78,901 students have registered for the examinations this year.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Art exhibition by Sudanese artist Abdul Qadir Al Bakhit at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Sadik Kwaish entitled "Talisma" at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artist Suha Mash'al at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Abdul Jabbar Salman on hedonism culture at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition on the 100th anniversary of the death of French novelist Guy De Maupassant at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of Iraqi books at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by a number of Jordanian artists entitled "The Sixth Exhibition — Samples From The Contemporary Jordanian Art 93" at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition "Prints and Drawings of Fakhrulnissa Zeid" (1915-1991) until the 15th of January '94 at Darat al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "Permanent" Exhibition. (Tel. 643251/2).

DRAMA

- ★ Drama for children entitled "The Question" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

SPORTS ROUND-UP

- ★ A one-hour programme featuring a condensation of the most popular games of the week with play-by-play announcement at the American Center at 5:00 p.m.

SEMINAR

- ★ Open seminar on working women and the Jordanian work project with the participation of Ms. Itaf Halasa, from the Ministry of Labour, and Ms. Asma Khader at the Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture at 6:00 p.m.

Jordan Times

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The press and U.S. politics for 1993-1994

By Dr. James Zogby

FOR THE past two weeks I reviewed President Bill Clinton's legislative successes during the past year and the challenges he faces as he prepares to introduce much-needed but controversial legislation to Congress in 1994.

Not only will the president be proposing legislation this year on health care, welfare reform and an anti-crime package, but all members of Congress and one-third of the Senate will be running for reelection. The very fact of the upcoming elections, as much as the substantive issues involved in the legislative proposals, will complicate Clinton's work in 1994.

Given this tangled web of politics, what are likely to emerge as the issues in the 1994 Congressional elections? Before answering that question, it is necessary to set the stage.

Democrats are extremely worried for three reasons. First, the president's party traditionally loses Congressional seats during these mid-term elections (that is, elections that take place in the years when there is no presidential election); and because they have the majority of senators up for reelection, many of whom are quite vulnerable to defeat, Democrats are concerned that they may lose control of the upper chamber. Second, there are still many Democrats in the House of Representatives whose seats are at risk due to the 1990 redistricting which put them in Republican-leaning districts. Yet those are rather traditional problems, while the third reason is not.

Close cooperation between the White House and the Democratic National Committee (DNC) helped Mr. Clinton win several of his early victories, and was important in countering Ross Perot's advertising blitz against NAFTA. But the primary purpose of the DNC is to provide national help to local Democratic candidates across the country, and during the past year the DNC spent relatively little time or money on local elections. This will change in 1994, but the normal election-year activities of the party are getting off to a late start.

Many argue lack sufficient help from the DNC was a factor in the spate of Democratic losses that began with the Senate run-off in Georgia in December of 1992 and ended with the Republican victories in the New York Mayoral and New Jersey and Virginia governor's contests last November. In between were numerous special elections for seats in state legislatures, where Republicans also won most of the races. Critics of the DNC's tactics argue that you can't govern if you win legislative battles while losing election after election.

But the picture is not all bleak — there is a silver lining for the Democrats. By year's

end the president's approval ratings were at their highest level in months, and he is pulling public attitudes towards the Democratic party along with him. By getting his legislation passed, and through a subtle but skillful handling of the press, Mr. Clinton has so far positioned his party well for the 1994 elections.

For example, recent polls show that the three most important issues in the minds of voters are the state of the economy and the need to create more jobs, combating crime and drug problems, and reforming the health care system. Voters thought by a margin of 49 per cent to 32 per cent that the Democratic Party would do a better job than the Republican Party and by an overwhelming margin of 61 per cent to 18 per cent voters felt that the Democrats would do a better job than Republicans at reforming the health care system.

Even on the issue of combating crime and drugs, on which the Democrats have traditionally been vulnerable, 35 per cent of voters feel that they would do a better job of bringing the situation under control, compared to 43 per cent for the Republicans. Although the Republicans fare better in this poll, it is close enough that it shouldn't hurt the Democrats in the 1994 elections, since most people don't think the federal government can do much to combat crime and so don't base their votes on that factor unless it is overwhelming.

So it is unsurprising to note that 55 per cent of the voters see Mr. Clinton as a different kind of Democrat, and that 67 per cent see the Democratic party as changing. This last

number is important since it might help Democrats hold off anti-incumbent fervor better than if they were viewed as "the same old Democratic party," as Republican challengers will undoubtedly try to paint them. And though it required significant effort, it was the highly ambitious and successful legislative agenda of the president that is primarily responsible for his good year-end polling numbers.

Though the president began 1993 with a rocky start, allowing the press to distort this issues agenda (by emphasising gays in the military, Zoe Baird and other failed appointments), Mr. Clinton's aggressive legislative agenda allowed him to control the debate for the remainder of the year. By holding news conference after news conference in which the main item was a piece of his legislative package, and through a carefully planned media strategy that focused on all the things the administration was proposing and doing, the Clinton team left the press with very little time to write its own stories and set its own agenda. It is a little appreciated fact in Washington even now, but it seems clear that the president's rigorous schedule helped to give his party a boost going into 1994.

But there is an important caveat to all of this: in three weeks' time Mr. Clinton could be in the depths of a slump and his ratings could be only half as good as they are now. In fact, in the last two weeks of the year and in the beginning of the new one, there is a sustained attack on Mr. Clinton's popularity. He is being accused once again by Republican sources of extramarital affairs

and of questionable financial dealings while he was governor of Arkansas. Why have these very old stories resurfaced and why is the press covering them again? The reason for this is partially that with Congress out of town and the news cycle slow the president is having a more difficult time setting the agenda, but a more important factor is the way the press covers politics — especially the presidency.

Some will recall that the press had buried Mr. Clinton before he was even inaugurated, only to give him excellent marks for his inauguration address, then bury him again over several flaps involving problems with his political appointments, then resurrect him again after his success on the budget bill before damning him once more over foreign policy problems.

And all this, of course, was after candidate Clinton was buried going into the nation's first primary in New Hampshire only to be pronounced the "comeback kid" after finishing second in a primary he was once expected to win, and then buried by the press a few more times during the primaries and again during the general campaign.

What is the explanation for this? Can it be that Mr. Clinton is some kind of genie who can never be permanently held down in the polls — is there something he couldn't come back from? Perhaps, but it is more likely a combination of public cynicism, press cynicism, and the fact that no one's political memory seems to be much longer than three weeks.

There is a familiar argument that after the Vietnam war and the scandal of Watergate, and

numerous scandals large and small since then, that the voting public has been increasing cynical about politics. This may explain to a large degree why voter turnout has been so low the past twenty years; and it may also help explain the cynicism of the press, since, as one White House official recently noted that "the press tends to fall into patterns that tend to follow, rather than create, public opinion or public fashion. It is well-known that we live in a cynical time and the press plays to that cynicism."

But political analyst Thomas Patterson argues that the press, and not only the politicians, created the climate in which public cynicism flourishes. In a study he conducted over the last thirty-five years, Patterson points out that in the 1960's less than one-third of the media's evaluations of political leaders were unfavourable. By the 1980's fully two-thirds of the media's comments about political leaders were negative. His study seems to show that the media's shift toward negative coverage began before the Vietnam war, and that the war and Watergate simply accelerated a trend already underway.

White House officials generally acknowledge that they rely on the media to get the administration's message out, but that they worry about how the press will "spin" the story. In an interview with *The White House Bulletin*, one White House official put it this way: "The president is rarely able to speak to the American people directly and has to rely instead on passing his comments through the media filter. As a consequence, how the press is

going to react to stories and strategising about the best way to get a story out goes on all the time."

Administration officials also pointed out to the *Bulletin* that, while the majority of reports get their facts right, none are able to consistently explain events correctly. As one official put it, "when they report on what they saw or heard, they usually get it right. But as soon as they try to explain what it meant or what we were attempting to accomplish, they fall into the quicksand called 'Washington journalism'." And, as Mr. Patterson notes in his study, the majority of press stories written today are interpretive and not simple reporting.

By focusing on a "story of the day" an with two-thirds of their comments being critical, it is easy to see why someone buried as often as Bill Clinton can come back just as often. People can only hear so many negative stories about a single subject before the stories cease to have an impact. So while the press is busy making this or that judgement, it does not resonate deeply with anyone in the media audience.

The other side of the argument, of course, is that positive stories are forgotten just as quickly. So although Mr. Clinton has achieved more in his first year than any president in almost forty years, very few Americans recall many of his victories. The same phenomenon explains how George Bush sank from a 90 per cent approval rating in 1990 to 39 per cent of the vote in 1992.

And with all the information available, it gets harder for any story, positive or negative, to get through. A study noted that it is almost twice as hard to reach voters through the media now than it was just ten years ago. And so it is that with the news cycle slow, the media turned to negative stories from the past. Although the White House seems to have gotten a little bit off the defensive, the president's popularity will probably not begin to rise again until the days just before his State of the Union Address, when the press will again turn its focus to issues of policy and substance.

But even when the news cycle begins to shift his way, the president will not be able to rest on his achievements and he knows it. With health care and welfare reform and an anti-crime package to be followed by mid-term elections in which his party will lose seats, Mr. Clinton has a full plate in 1994. And of course, there is the matter of foreign policy and continuing crises in Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia where American soldiers will have spent their second consecutive New Year.

American politics is never dull, and Mr. Clinton's aggressive agenda has made it even more interesting. In all likelihood, 1994 will be an even more eventful year than was 1993.

Democracy is about openness, not secrecy

ONE ISLAMIST deputy has described the government briefing of parliament on the peace process during two secret sessions these past two weeks as not revealing more than is being read in newspapers. The deputy was speaking last week before the speech that His Majesty the King delivered on Saturday in which he revealed many of the secrets pertaining to the peace process and Arab coordination.

Jordanians might not know the details of the talks between the Arabs and Israel in general or the latter and Jordan in particular, but they are fully aware of the positions of every party to the talks and their limitations. In fact, those who have the stamina and enthusiasm to pursue the details are continuously following the news through all sorts of media. It is therefore totally unacceptable that Jordan's 12th Parliament, well into the fifth year of democracy, would choose to enhance a trend set by the previous parliament by accepting to debate the future of Jordan in a secret session. We fail to see what is the wisdom or the logic behind holding such secret sessions. For one, deputies and ministers alike are representatives of the people and not the guardians of public affairs who have a monopoly on information and decision making. Secrecy is warranted when national security is threatened. Is this the case? We do not think so. And we do not hear that the government had held parliament so. In fact, it would be extremely healthy for the present and future of Jordan if debates like these were made open for Jordanians to realise their country's strengths and weaknesses. Secrecy will only enhance suspicion in people's minds that something is wrong.

Furthermore, secret parliament sessions do little to strengthen democracy and make it take deep roots. Jordanians are mature enough to discuss peace and war issues as much as they are fit to discuss agriculture or the Election Law. And they have chosen their deputies to Parliament to ensure them full participation in power and in decision making. It is, therefore, undemocratic to deny the people to take part in the debate or at least bear what goes on in it. We, therefore, hope that our honourable deputies would in the future refuse to hold secret sessions, not only because they are undemocratic, but also because they weaken people's belief in the deputies themselves and democracy in general.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AMRUSTOUR daily Tuesday commented on a visit to Jordan by Amr Al-Musa, the Egyptian foreign minister, who carried a message to His Majesty King Hussein from President Mubarak about the coordination of efforts for peace. It is a fact that Cairo and Amman are coordinating their efforts with the other states involved in the peace process and therefore coordination of steps and stands is a must at this stage and before the completion of the peace negotiations with Israel, said the daily. Constant consultations between the two leaders have been going on towards reaching an acceptable formula that would ensure a durable peace in our region, added the paper. It said that Jordan and Egypt have a pivotal role to play in the peace process and are indeed pursuing efforts since the Madrid conference to make the peace endeavours succeed. Therefore, it is one can only regard Egypt's participation in this joint effort as vital to close the gap which is still separating the Arab and Palestinian sides. Egypt, said the paper, is also clearly trying to open channels of dialogue among the Arab states with the hopes of attaining the maximum degree of solidarity in the face of the critical stage and the deadlocked negotiations with Israel.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily tackled agricultural problems in an open letter to the prime minister. Since 1986, said Mohammed Masalha, the agricultural sector in Jordan has been facing accumulating difficulties especially in the Jordan Valley, which produces most of Jordan's food. But over the past successive governments of Jordan promised a lot and delivered a little because the country lacks a clear agricultural policy, he said. Every year, governments dealt with the agricultural sector's crisis, but never had these governments a clear and permanent policy to deal with any of the sector's issues, said the writer. The result was that the farmers had to carry a heavy burden of debts and were unable to pay back or for the interest or the principal, added the writer. The farmers are facing the problem of paying higher prices for farming requirements and equipment and find themselves unable to settle their dues to the money-lending institutions, said Masalha. The writer appealed to the prime minister to conduct a field trip to the farms and meet with representatives of farmers in order to hear their views and their grievances and remove the obstacles standing in the way of increased production and marketing.

Croatia concerned over Muslim gains in Bosnia

By Dan De Luce
Reuters

ZAGREB — Croatia's recent threats of possible military intervention in Bosnia reflect a growing concern in the government over Muslim advances on the battlefield, political commentators and military analysts say.

But the tough talk from Zagreb probably represents more propaganda than serious intention as a major army action in Bosnia would carry tremendous risks for Croatia, including possible economic sanctions by the United Nations, they said.

"It would be fatal for Croatia," said Fran Vrsnar, a Croatian military analyst. "It would bring about the implementation of sanctions."

However, officials in Zagreb said on Monday Croatian and Bosnian leaders would hold peace talks in Vienna on Tuesday to discuss territorial disputes as well as humanitarian questions.

Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic will meet Haris Silajdzic, prime minister of the Muslim-led Bosnian government, a spokesman for the foreign minister said.

Croatia's army commander and defence minister said last week the country might intervene directly in central Bosnia, and President Franjo Tudjman hinted the same in a television interview.

ties in the central Lasva Valley.

Croatian officials have been conducting a war of words with Muslim leaders over which ethnic group represents the real victims of Bosnia's war, said Zarko Puhovski, a political commentator. "There has been a decline in anti-Serb propaganda, the theme is anti-Muslim now," he said.

Foreign Minister Granic has called attention to the worsening conditions in the Croat enclave, and has appealed to the U.N. to declare the enclave a demilitarised safe haven similar to those created for Muslims in eastern Bosnia.

Forming safe areas would limit the Muslim offensive in the Croat-populated Lasva Valley without requiring a fresh military commitment, commentators said. But the U.N. lacks enough troops to enforce the safe havens already in existence.

Officials from the mostly Muslim Bosnian government delivered their own threats to Croats over the weekend, saying the Bosnian army would push for control of the Lasva Valley area around Vitez in 1994.

Military analysts say the Bosnian army holds a distinct advantage over the encircled Croats in central Bosnia, with superior manpower, morale and organisation.

U.N. military sources and diplomats have said that Croatia has armed and steered the Bosnian Croat Defence Council (HVO), which has suffered setbacks in central Bosnia against its former Muslim allies.

A British lesson on boundaries

By Chaim Herzog

THERE IS a natural tendency just now to compare the peace talks between us and the Palestinians and the new agreement between Britain and the Irish Republic.

But this is dangerous, since the circumstances and background in each case are totally different.

The conflict in Ireland, which has gone on for almost 400 years, is based on the struggle between the Irish, who are Catholic, and the Protestant British settlers who currently constitute a majority in the north. No other conflict in the world, including ours, is characterised by such deep, uncompromising hatred.

The Irish Republican army is active not only in the north, but also in London and other British cities, unleashing terror to advance its political positions. This blood-soaked struggle has cost some 3,000 lives in recent years.

And yet, despite the deep difference between that conflict and ours, it is possible to draw some interesting and significant analogies.

First, it should be recalled that in Ireland, the historic 1922 peace agreement brought neither calm nor resolution of the conflict. On the contrary, the signing of that agreement and the establishment of the Irish Republic were followed by a bloody civil war.

The cruel killings in the 1920s are engraved upon my childhood memories and remain among the first impressions in my life.

expect the historic agreement with the PLO to be followed for a long time by violent clashes and terrorism. The powder keg still holds enough explosives, and there are enough elements around wishing to ignite the fuse.

During the entire period of the conflict in Ireland, the British have refused to enter into negotiations with the Irish extremists; to this very day, there is a ban on leaders of the Irish underground appearing in the official British media.

I have been following this tenacious British stand with interest. What impresses me, perhaps more than anything else, is the British government's recently proclaimed condition that if even a single IRA bullet is fired in a three-month period, there will be no talks.

The British are trying to show who controls the area before entering into negotiations, and they are trying to impose a cessation of terrorism on the other side as a basis for negotiations.

We can learn something from the British negotiating moves. The current crisis in our talks with the PLO again reveals the shortcomings of the Declaration of Principles, which left substantive issues murky.

There is talk of a policy of vagueness. But I think that policy has not proven justified in our case. The vagueness has been too extensive, particularly around the most substantive issues.

For here we are, just three months after the signing of the declaration, discovering that the two leaders are far apart in their views of what the agreement is supposed to achieve.

The issue of international border crossings is not merely a symbolic matter, but one of principle, and the prime minister should be encouraged in his firm stand. With hindsight, it isn't clear why the vague wording of the clause about Israel's responsibility for external security was not supplemented by a sentence spelling out the question of border crossings.

Israel has both security and political reasons, and endorsement in the Declaration of Principles — to insist on retaining control of border crossings.

It is important for us to supervise incoming and outgoing traffic, certainly in the delicate, fateful phase we are approaching after the signature of the Gaza-Jericho deal, and important that we make a firm distinction between the interim stages and the permanent settlement.

Yasser Arafat is striving to introduce, even at this early stage, the attributes of political sovereignty for the Palestinian authority in the territories. It is crucial that we make it clear to him that we are not discussing the establishment of a state now.

The reason we must not concede this point is because we are dealing with the substance of the agreement. If we give way, we shall harm the substance of the entire process. The

moment the PLO gets control of border crossings will be the moment we give up part of our sovereignty and the concept we held to when we entered the peace process. (And all this before the PLO has even proved its ability to wield control in the area!)

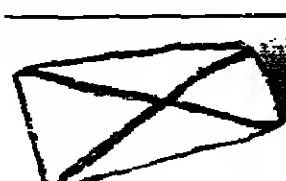
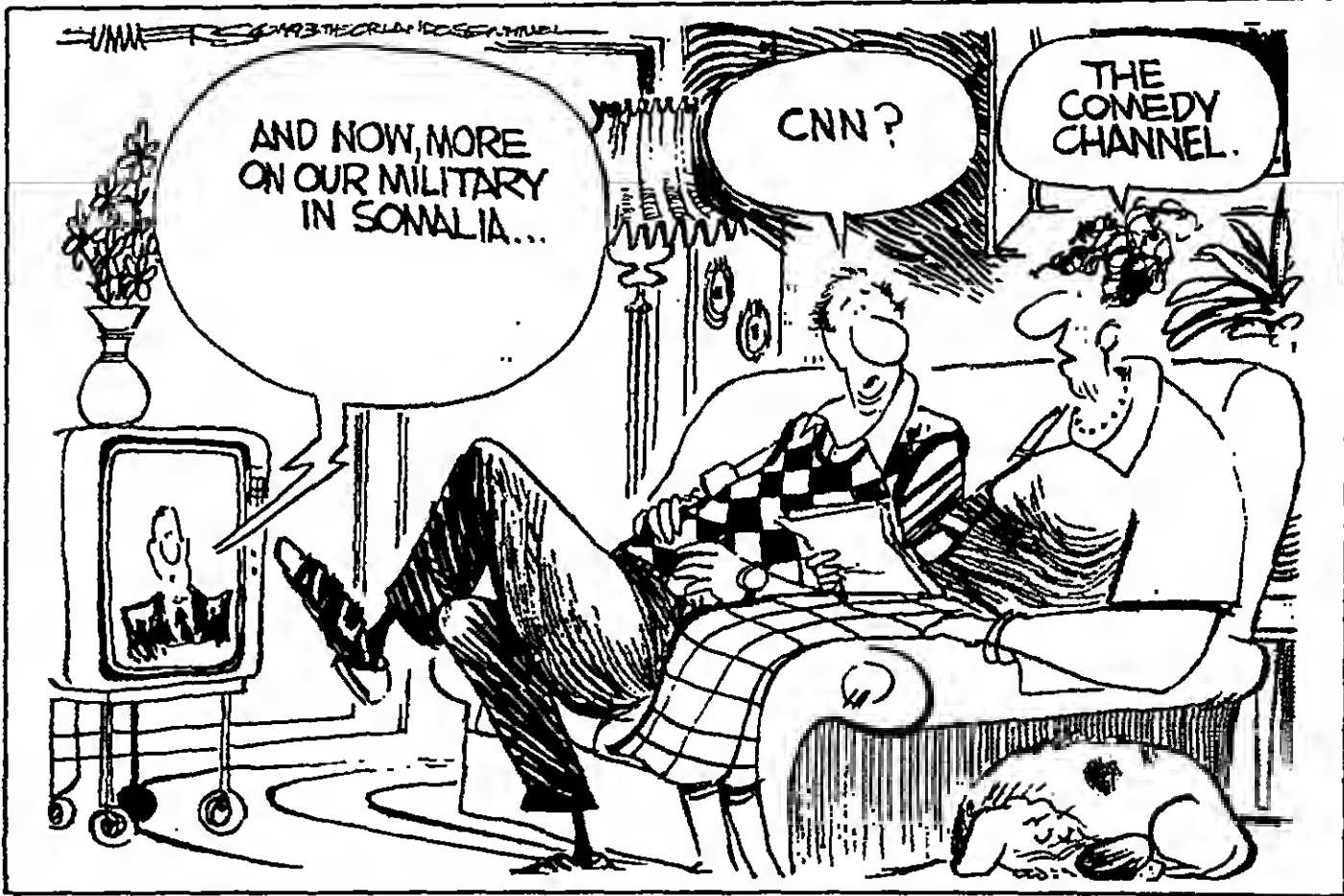
If we do not respect our own stands along the way, we can hardly expect Arafat to do so.

The PLO leader is under heavy pressure; of that there is no doubt at all. He is being assailed from the territories, and by elements close to him in the leadership. And the international community, at least the Americans, does not appear to be backing his stubborn stand. If he persists, he could damage his international standing.

Ultimately, Arafat has no alternative to the process he has entered — and he will want to find a solution before bilateral talks are renewed with Syria and Jordan in Washington in January. Their imminence is pressing him even more, a situation that should be exploited to the hilt.

With all our desire not to waste time or weaken our interlocutor, it must be made plain to Arafat that in matters of principle such as border crossings, the Israeli government reflects a national consensus and cannot allow itself to retreat in the face of his pressure.

The writer was Israel's sixth president. This article is reprinted from the *Jerusalem Post*.



Clear course is needed

(Continued from page 1)

Rabat summit because we support our brothers who had chosen this course.

We implore God to help them in preserving their credibility in what they have committed themselves.

What concerns us at this short period of time is to reach a joint vision with regard to all important issues and we hope each side would remain committed.

We are always committed. I had set Tuesday for the meeting with the Palestinian leadership but it seems it could be Wednesday or Thursday.

But if there is no sincerity and no genuine interest in cooperation to serve the people, I do not believe we can wait for ever.

We realise the heavy burden on the Palestinian leadership at this stage but it had chosen to carry this responsibility and we hope it would reach the level where we can continue to support it at all levels.

We look forward towards a responsible body representative of the people, backed by tremendous manpower, and

enjoying credibility, so that we can go along the road together.

I have also spoken about coordination with Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, and we have proven our commitment to work together. No one should believe that we will go it alone in this regard.

Never have we compromised any iota of the Palestinian soil nor any right of the Palestinian people. We have been committed all along in support of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

Let us hope we will reach a comprehensive peace with the help of all parties.

We are not ready to sign a peace treaty unless all the problems are solved in a satisfactory manner and on all tracks and balanced with regard to us and the Israelis.

Then we will have peace at the end and will mark the beginning of a new era where all will live in peace and security.

Then the doors will be open to progress.

We will concentrate our effort on the issue of land and water and people's rights in the talks and all the other items of the common agenda which we had endorsed.

By Justin Keay

LONDON — Even within the business community, it has become fashionable to decry the excesses of the 1980s. The "yuppie," its archetypically brash yet dumb representative is now almost an extinct species, while the unrestrained, free market go-get-em ethos has given way to something more considered and thoughtful. As Europe and North America struggle with the hangover — most notably, the most serious recession since the 1930s, record numbers of commercial and personal bankruptcies and a consequent evaporation of consumer confidence — the Reagan/Thatcher boom already seems to belong to another lifetime.

For many people, however, the legacy of the "decade of greed" will be with them for many years to come. Indeed, for the really unlucky on both sides of the Atlantic it will follow them to their graves.

The truth is that the 1980s was not just the decade of greed: it was the era when gross, large-scale fraud became almost commonplace, facilitated by the explosive growth in cross-border trading and computerisation, leaving hundreds of thousands of depositors, pensioners, shareholders and workers much the poorer.

With money tight in the 1990s, many are calling in their investments or other financial commitments and finding that promises made back in the 1980s are often worse than empty. For the whizzkids who wheeled and dealt their way through billions of dollars, money had become something almost ephemeral; for many of the smaller investors and others to whom it belonged, and who had worked hard to earn it, it was their only hope of a decent retirement or house.

Three years into the 1990s, in the U.K. alone, there are a record number of fraud cases on police files. They read like a litany of the hopes and ultimate failure of the decade: Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), Asil Nadir's Polly Peck, Brent Walker, Maxwell... to name just the most famous. Other countries have been lost to similar large-scale cosmopolitan crookery: the U.S.'s Donald Trump and Australia's Alan Bond and Christopher Skase are further Anglo-Saxon examples. Many were just plain crooks; others, jumped-up

high fliers who overestimated their business acumen.

Most fraud cases are unresolved, either for want of evidence — they are notoriously complex, and their often international character makes them even more so — or for want of money: the lengthy judicial process is extremely costly and must usually be paid for out of scarce public funds.

Fraud has reached epidemic proportions and yet the system of controlling and policing, and ultimately catching the fraudsters, is hopelessly inefficient. The internationalisation of finance, securities and indeed, corporate activity has in no way been matched by an internationalisation in fraud detection.

Interpol, the international organisation based in Lyon (France) that pools police information from all over the world, has a poor record on fraud: Most of its limited resources have been devoted to solving violent or drug-related crime, while many of its members — including the U.S. and Britain — have been wary of sharing sensitive information with less than savory governments which are members of Interpol.

National governments are

often stymied in their attempts to uncover essential information or extradite key witnesses by the different rules that may prevail in other countries, as has happened most visibly with Asil Nadir of Polly Peck in Northern Cyprus, a country which Britain does not even recognise, diplomatically.

Even when cooperation on fraud issues is guaranteed by a second or third country, it is often given low priority. With limited resources and increases in all kinds of criminality, national police forces see non-violent "white collar crime" as something to be looked at during the lunch hour.

Tony MacStravick was detective chief superintendent for the Company Fraud Department of London's Metropolitan Police, and is now assigned to Kroll Associates, the international corporate investigators. He believes Britain is currently experiencing an explosion in fraud, yet the authorities remain hopelessly confused and uncertain about how to cope with it. Little is being done despite growing public awareness of the problem and outrage against high-flying crooks who seem apparently immune from suc-

cessful prosecution.

"The increasingly complex and international nature of large-scale fraud makes proper detection almost impossible," he says, pointing out that certain existing legislation actually makes matters worse. "Client confidentiality and banking secrecy, as it exists in some countries, works against tracing allegedly defrauded money."

Mr. MacStravick points out that development in Britain during the 1980s actually made the position of those fighting fraud weaker, as numerous newly-established self-regulatory bodies struggled to establish goal-posts of legality and illegality. Many of these remain, in effect, powerless, increasing pressure for a tightening of their powers. September, for example, saw a major shake-up take place in Britain's Securities and Investment Board (SIB), the so-called watchdog for the City of London, with more resources being channelled to its supervisory, enforcement and legal arms.

Mr. MacStravick emphasises that under Britain's arcane, precedent-driven legal system there isn't even a legal defini-

tion of fraud: Courts attempt to try the accused with a dazzling array of crimes, including "criminal wrongdoing" and "intention to defraud."

The 1987 Criminal Justice Act created a framework for the investigation and prosecution of fraud, and established a unified body which would supervise cases involving more than £5 million (\$7.5 million) — the Serious Fraud Office (SFO). The SFO has since acquired a reputation for moving with "glacial slowness" and for bungling a succession of cases, most notably that of Asil Nadir who managed to skip record bail of £3.5 million (\$5.25 million), chartering an aircraft to his native country.

Bankrupt in Britain, Mr. Nadir is abroad which are out of the reach of British investigators and the creditors who invested in the textile-to-foods group Polly Peck.

Critics point out that during its six-year history, the SFO has only brought one case to a successful close — Guinness. Even there, the principal motivation or behind the group's illegal acquisition of Distillers — former managing director Ernest Shtanders — is free after serv-

ing only part of his original sentence, on the grounds of ill-health.

There is increasing recognition that getting a conviction, and after that achieving a sentence that reflects the seriousness of the crime, is something of a lottery. There is a very real danger here: Laws that cannot be properly enforced, or which result in puny sentences after months of preparation and public expense bring the entire system of criminal justice into disrepute, which has far-reaching and disturbing implications.

"The truth is that even successful prosecutions do not result in particularly severe sentences for the fraudsters," says Mr. MacStravick, pointing out that the ten-year sentence passed to Barlow Clowes and the six years to the directors of Dunsdale Securities (two major recent fraud cases in the U.K.) were exceptionally high. "With this in mind, the prosecution should be less ambitious and try and get a conviction on at least some of the counts against the accused, rather than wasting time in building a case that incorporates the full magnitude of the case."

This argument would appear to have logic on its side. Mr. Nadir, for example, currently faces some 59 charges, involving "theft" of in excess of £155 million. It will take months if not years to unravel all the strands of Polly Peck and secure a reasonably strong case for the prosecution. Why not instead hone in on certain more easily provable (if smaller) counts, that are more comprehensible to the jury and go for a quick conviction?

Mr. MacStravick also feels the criminal justice system needs a number of amendments, including a time limit on the bringing of fraud cases — for example up to four months rather than years, as is now often the case. He is also adamant that there has to be more international cooperation on fraud issues, which would include agreement on just what does constitute wrongdoing.

"It sounds obvious to say it, but governments everywhere must recognise that fraud is a crime, just like any other crime, and that people get affected and hurt by it," says Mr. MacStravick. "For the sake of the victims and to deter future fraudsters, justice must be seen to be done" — World News Link.

No curbs on credit for exports

(Continued from page 1)

However, bankers said the additional credit came too late for the market to utilise it since the financial year was drawing to a close.

The ceiling is set as a percentage of the gross domestic product for the previous year.

The government has been trying to exclude credits extended for industrial investment from the ceiling, arguing that such investment

had contributed to economic growth and would be reflected in terms of increase in the gross domestic product.

But the IMF argued that it was too early for such an exemption since Jordan was in the early stages of implementing the economic restructuring programme.

It was likely that the IMF would respond positively to the Jordanian request at a later stage in the second phase (1993-98) of the restructuring programme.

Israel expands Golan colony

(Continued from page 1)

Golan offers of say when they were made, but the revelation was significant because it indicated the negotiating process with Israel has repeatedly reached the point of offers being made and turned down.

The only official forum for talks between Israel and Syria has been the peace talks in Washington, part of the U.S.-backed peace process launched in Madrid two years ago. Those have been stalled for months.

Syria steadfastly has denied a series of reports that it recently held secret talks with Israel, and expressed irritation after the Palestinians reached a deal with the Jewish state that followed months of secret talks.

Addressing the 21st conference of the general assembly of the Federation of Arab News Agencies, Mr. Khaddam said, "Syria has rejected many attempts to reach a solution on the Golan Heights because it

deeply believes in the comprehensiveness of any solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and is also convinced that unilateral and partial solutions could not bring about just and peaceful solutions."

He reiterated that Syria demanded "full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories."

"There will never be a disgraceful peace, nor will there be a peace that does not guarantee our full rights... a peace of which we will, together with our coming generations, be proud no matter how crucial the circumstances might be," he said.

Asked about his views on the forthcoming Clinton-Assad summit, Mr. Khaddam said, "We hope that serious steps might be carried out on the road to a just peace that may lead to a full Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands."

"We expect positive results and we have to work to reach these results," he added.

Rabin optimistic of talks

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Kaddoumi repeated there was "no document of understanding drawn up during the talks, contrary to what Mr. Peres announced at the time. 'Ideas were proposed and submitted for discussion,'" he said.

However, Mr. Musa said that the "picture is not that bleak" and that the PLO-Israeli negotiations could resume soon.

Mr. Peres blamed PLO in-fighting for the problems in negotiations and warned that Israel was "not waiting breathlessly" to carry out the Palestinian autonomy plan.

Dr. Shaath was quoted by the Israeli daily Haaretz as saying he was ready to resume negotiations "tomorrow morning," and accused Israel of attaching conditions.

Mr. Peres also suggested fencing in the Palestinian camp was the reason that Israel could not pin down an agreement with the PLO and said that setting aside understandings Israel says were reached in Cairo would "create a vacuum."

"You cannot cancel an agreement, create a vacuum and say let's go take a walk through a vacuum," Mr. Peres said.

Dr. Shaath charged that Mr. Peres had created the misunderstanding over the Cairo talks by dictating and then amending drafts of agreements reached without PLO approval.

"When we objected to several things he dictated before our very eyes, Peres said, 'forget it. These are just principles, tomorrow we'll draw up a more exact draft,'" Dr. Shaath said.

He added that the next day Peres came up with a draft "completely different from what he dictated," in Cairo. Dr. Shaath said that was why he faxed his own amended version to Israel, which Mr. Rabin did accept.

Mr. Rabin Tuesday confirmed that Israel was studying the Palestinian position on the document.

"It is natural that each side will try to obtain the maximum during negotiations," he said. "We shall certainly find a way to overcome these obstacles."

But he added: "If the Palestinians believe that they are not committed by this text, then we are not committed by it either."

Mr. Kaddoumi said "it's up to Israel to make concessions, we have no more concessions left to make."

Settlers move into school

(Continued from page 1)

A booby-trap exploded injuring two Israeli soldiers overnight at an army firing range near Tel Aviv, military officials said.

One of the men was in a serious condition after the blast, the officials added.

then killed by two Palestinians disguised as religious Jews near an Israeli settlement south of Khan Yunes on Oct. 24.

The army is still hunting a second suspect.

Few restraints on white collar crime

The 1980s — the so-called decade of greed — spawned an epidemic of fraud and white collar crime (WNL photo)



Sorting out the 'library' of genes

By Barry James

EVERY. France — Imagine that you have to arrange thousands of weighty tomes in a library. Neither the books nor the chapters are labeled. The pages — there are several hundred to each volume — are jumbled up and are not numbered. And the text is written in a language you don't quite understand, using no more than four letters of the alphabet.

The only thing you know for certain is that the library has 23 rooms of varying size, and each room has two identical sets of shelves.

Now arrange the books in the correct order. A team of French scientists researching the human genetic blueprint known as the genome has in effect succeeded in doing just that. Daniel Cohen, Jean Weissenbach and Ilya M. Chumakov — all members of the Genethon research laboratory here — have managed, figuratively, to place the books in order on the shelves, put the chapters in sequence and work out many of the page numbers.

Their "first generation physical map of the human genome" is being hailed as a stunning scientific achievement that will provide researchers a valuable tool in hunting the genes responsible for more than 3,000 known hereditary diseases.

The map gives a broad but still imprecise and scantily detailed overview of about 90 per cent of the genome, compared to the two per cent that had been mapped before.

The achievement fulfills Genethon's aim of completing the map in three years. The laboratory was established in 1990 by the French muscular dystrophy association, with money from an annual series of televised fund-raisers. The latest telethon raised more than 350 million francs (\$60 million) in cash and pledges in what has become one of France's most popular national causes.

In keeping with its philosophy that genetic information should not be patented, Genethon immediately made the map available over the Internet scientific network and

will publish its findings in a 300-page book early next year.

The library represents the genome, a 3.2 billion character "text" written in linear fashion along a 1.5 metre wisp of deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA, one thousand times thinner than a filament of silk. The DNA, arranged in the famous double helix, is coiled up in a space one thousand times smaller than a pinhead in the heart of each human cell.

Each room in the library represents one of 23 pairs of chromosomes, one from the father and one from the mother. The books represent the more than 30,000 slices of DNA material that the Genethon team multiplied and analysed with the help of sophisticated robots and powerful computers. The chapter headings are genetic "markers," or known information points within the DNA fragments. Finding a marker is something like searching for an unusual word in a huge computer data base.

The chemical "language" of the DNA text is translated into various combinations of four

letters, for example, "TCGACGTTTAT-GAGC-TCATGCTA," arranged in an endless, hypnotic ruse. Every few thousand characters, the text resolves into clusters of information known as genes, the instructions that tell eyes to be blue or hair to be curly. But sometimes, the book of life contains a spelling mistake that can translate into a fearsome handicap like muscular dystrophy.

Knowledge of the book in the wrong hands could be a frightening method of social control. Only two weeks ago, for example, China said it would use eugenics to "avoid new births of inferior quality and heighten the standards of the whole population."

"We think a lot about the ethical problems, a huge amount," said Susan Cure, a scientist at Genethon. "But what the people in the muscular dystrophy association want is to find the disease genes as quickly as possible because they have children who might benefit."

The map combines for the

first time a genetic map devised by Dr. Weissenbach containing more than 2,000 known markers, and a physical map created by Dr. Cohen, which describes the way the DNA fragments are arranged along their filament. Dr. Chumakov was responsible for the technical wizardry that enabled the vast mass of data to be integrated.

It means that scientists can now place several hundred known genes with some precision on their respective chromosomes. In the future, the many tens of thousands of genes that still have to be deciphered will find their place on the map. The addition of more markers — the target is 5,000 — will enable gene hunters to concentrate their search in the right place in the library.

It took six years to find the gene that took the life of the son of Bernard Barataud, the energetic go-for-broke president of the muscular dystrophy association, and at that rate it would take forever to locate every aberrant gene. The map will make it easier and much

quicker to locate such killers in the future. If a disease is associated with a known marker, for example, researchers will know in which chapter or page to look for it. In theory, it should be possible to splice over the segment of DNA containing the faulty gene, just as you can patch an error in a computer programme.

The map is analogous to the rudimentary chart that Columbus took to the New World. It indicates roughly where genes are, without saying what they do. But as more markers are added and more genes are identified, it will become increasingly precise. Dr. Cohen predicts that within 15 years, it will be as detailed as today's satellite maps of the earth.

The Genethon team has achieved a breakthrough that had not been expected until 1995 under the vast Human Genome Project, led by the United States, which aims to describe the entire genome, chromosome by chromosome and gene by gene, early in the next century — International Herald Tribune.

Spain bids to curb carnage on the roads

By Clar Ni Chonghaile
Reuters

MADRID — Every Monday morning, Spain wakes up to a grim body count as the cost of another fun-filled weekend is counted in lives lost on the roads.

The death toll is as much a part of news bulletins as the soccer report. Graphic pictures of twisted and charred wrecks fill the newspapers, mute testimony to the devastating consequences of a lethal cocktail of youth, alcohol and speed.

But some politicians and businessmen have decided, enough is enough and have united in a bid to put a stop to the carnage.

Traffic police, government representatives, mayors, members of automobile clubs and

driving school instructors are just some of the people who have signed a pact aimed at elevating road safety to the top of their list of priorities.

Behind the initiative is Director-General of Traffic Miguel Munoz Medina, who says Spaniards are becoming more aware about road safety.

"There comes a moment when it is time to say enough," says Mr. Munoz, the official in charge of drafting traffic laws and regulations. "We are experiencing a moment of extreme public sensibility about road accidents."

The number killed on the roads remains amongst the highest in Europe, with some 6,000 deaths in 1992. However, 1993 should be the fourth consecutive year to see a decline in the death toll.

"This is not satisfactory but it is a sign of hope," Mr. Munoz said. He claims Spain is on a par with other European countries with a similar car culture.

"I don't think we are much different from other countries as far as deaths per million go. We are around the level of France and Belgium although way ahead of the United Kingdom which has about half as many deaths as us," he said.

He dismissed the traditional stereotype of Spaniards as hard drivers.

"I don't think Spaniards are the worst drivers. Yes, people accuse them of being very uncooperative and difficult but I doubt if this is true."

On the wide tree-lined streets of Madrid, it's all too easy to believe in the

stereotypes.

Cars screech to a halt at pedestrian crossings and drivers tap their steering wheels impatiently as pedestrians scramble across, casting anxious glances left and right.

Once the lights change, the cars are off, roaring down the boulevards like race horses bursting from their stalls.

An aggressive advertising campaign has been launched by the traffic authorities in a bid to change such attitudes and it pulls no punches in hammering home the grisly consequences of recklessness.

"We were worried about it at first. We did not want to offend the Spanish people... just to let them know the consequences of imprudence," Mr. Munoz said.

Even in Madrid's record

shops, the thumping music is interrupted every so often with a warning to young customers to dilute their weekend pleasure with prudence on the roads.

Young men are most likely to end up in the twisted and crushed wrecks. Car accidents are the biggest killer in the 18 to 25 years age group, Mr. Munoz said.

In 1992, 6,014 people died on Spanish roads and motorways according to Interior Ministry statistics. Of those nearly 28 per cent were men aged between 25 and 44.

Despite increased awareness, the slaughter goes on.

At the beginning of December, 80 people were killed in road accidents during a long weekend which stretched in true Spanish tradition from

Friday night until Wednesday. This was 19 less than in 1992 but for Mr. Munoz it is still far too high a price to pay.

Many of the deaths are the result of a fatal combination of alcohol, youth and a thirst for speed.

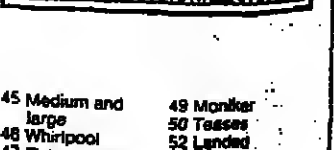
"Alcohol plays a part in a third of the accidents and though it is difficult to prove, it is believed to be responsible for one out of two road deaths," said Mr. Munoz.

He is sceptical about a new scheme to cut down on drinking and driving, devised by police in the northern region of Catalonia.

Police are offering free breathalyser tests outside bars and clubs in a bid to awaken partygoers to the danger of driving when over the limit.

Volume of trading at the Amman Financial Market slightly short of one billion mark

Dr. Toukan, in answering a question, revealed that foreign (non-Arab) institutions were given permission to buy shares worth about JD 40 million in 1993 but what was actually bought did not exceed JD 500,000 at the end of last year.



SARDINES

YOUNG MAN, YOU MAKE A DELICIOUS SODA! I'LL HAVE ANOTHER ONE, PLEASE!

YES SIR!

THIS ONE IS EVEN BETTER! I HOPE YOU DON'T GET MAD AT ME—BUT I CAN'T PAY YOU FOR THE SODAS!

BUT I WANT YOU TO TAKE MY PET SARDINES IN PAYMENT!

SARDINES? WHAT AM I GONNA DO WITH PET SARDINES?

WELL, MAYBE I COULD TAKE 'EM HOME FOR DINNER!

NO, TAKE THEM TO A MOVIE, BOY—THEY'VE ALREADY HAD THEIR DINNER!

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7 Crumhorn	43 Bishop's headress	48 Whirlpool	52 Lane
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Trace of gold

UAE eyes spending cuts due to low oil prices

A UAE finance ministry circular in July cited low oil prices as the main reason it was asking ministries to curb spending estimates for the 1994 budget.

Like other Arab Gulf oil producers, much of the UAE's federal revenue comes from oil. Prices are near five-year lows from an excess of oil supply and world recession.

Saudi Arabia announced last week that its spending would fall by 20 per cent to 160 billion riyals (\$42.67 billion) from last year's budgeted 196.95 billion (\$52.52 billion).

Abu Dhabi, richest of the UAE's seven emirates and its biggest oil producer, is believed to provide more than 80 per cent of funds for the federal budget.

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Talk of U.S.-N. Korea deal premature - Seoul

SEOUL (Agencies) — South Korea said Tuesday it was premature to believe North Korea and the United States would strike a deal soon on nuclear inspections.

North Korea watchers in Seoul agreed that optimistic sentiment from Washington about an agreement soon with the secretive Pyongyang government were overstated, and they said negotiators should be cautious until the last minute.

"Talks between Washington and Pyongyang are going in the right direction, there has been progress. But the deal is not something that can be reached overnight," said a Foreign Ministry official.

"It is premature to be talking about a deal being reached very soon."

The United States said Monday a deal could be wrapped up this week on inspections of North Korea's nuclear sites.

The United States has been leading an effort to persuade North Korea to open its nuclear facilities to international inspection, to allay fears it is building atomic arms.

"Past experience shows that North Korea should not be trusted easily. One never knows what they have done it," said one respected analyst.

"We know the North has not much choice but to accept a deal. But North Korea does not always act the way we think it will."

Months of unproductive haggling between U.S. and North Korean officials failed to break the deadlock until last week, when there were signs a deal was in the offing.

North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung said Saturday his country had agreed to a joint statement with Washington paving the way for the nuclear dispute to be "settled fairly."

He did not give details but in a later announcement North Korea's Foreign Ministry sug-

gested international monitors would only be allowed into the country's seven declared nuclear sites for one-time inspections.

This falls short of the regular and ad hoc visits required by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, of which North Korea is a signatory.

A senior official in Washington would not discuss details of the deal with North Korea, but indicated the Pyongyang announcement reflected its essence.

North Korea threatened last March to withdraw from the treaty, increasing fears in the United States and South Korea that it may move aggressively ahead with a nuclear arsenal.

An official at the South Korean Defence Ministry said it was certain that cancelling Team Spirit, annual military exercises involving South Korean and U.S. troops, would be one of the conditions attached to any deal.

North Korea says Team Spirit is a dress rehearsal for nuclear invasion, while the South and the United States describe it as a defensive exercise.

The cancellation of Team Spirit has for years been a basic requirement of the North before agreeing to better North-South ties.

News reports have speculated that if agreement on nuclear inspections was reached smoothly, U.S. and North Korean officials would meet again to discuss a "package deal" of economic incentives in return for broader inspection rights.

North and South Korea were on the verge of an armed clash at sea which could have led to all-out war in 1987, a major daily in Seoul said Tuesday, quoting former President Chun Doo-Hwan.

Both Koreas dispatched

warships to international waters off the Japanese on stand-by during the crisis in January 1987, said the JoongAng Daily.

It said Mr. Chun recounted the event visitors who called on him on New Year.

The near-crisis occurred as the two Koreas were vying to pick up a North Korean medical doctor, Kim Man-Chul, and his family who had stowed away to Japan on a fishing boat and were about to be expelled by Tokyo to the open sea.

"In the course of the efforts to take them in, there was a dangerous moment when the two sides came close to an armed clash at sea," the former military general turned president said. "At that time, I decided to risk a war."

The crisis was defused by the United States, which stepped in to persuade Tokyo to change the expulsion plans and fly the family to a third country.

Taiwan accepted Dr. Kim and his family at South Korea's request and later allowed them to resettle in South Korea.

Asked what he would have done if the crisis had erupted into an armed conflict, Mr. Chun said: "I was prepared for a clash."

Mr. Chun's top aide, Min Jung-Ki, said Mr. Chun often took the opportunity of meetings with visitors to stress the importance of a strong defence posture against the North.

Mr. Chun, who turns 62 on Jan. 18, led a rebellion within the military hierarchy and rose to power the following year. He was president from August 1980 to February 1988.

Mr. Chun was succeeded by his military academy classmate and former general, Roh Tae-Woo. Mr. Roh was replaced by Kim Young-Sam, a former opposition politician, who launched the first civilian government in 32 years in February 1993.



2 dead in Australian bushfires

SYDNEY — A firefighter was killed Tuesday and a second was seriously injured as they battled Australia's worst bushfires in 15 years, police said. The casualties occurred when a burnt tree crashed into a fire engine at Grafton on the Pacific Highway, a major trunk route linking Sydney and Brisbane, which has been cut by the fires. Traffic was being diverted early Tuesday. The fatality was the second in the fires which have already destroyed at least six

homes and are threatening thousands more. Up to 10 acres of New South Wales have been classified as being under a state of emergency, as about 70 separate fires, fuelled by searing heat and strong winds, blazed across the state late Monday and early Tuesday. Two thousand firefighters are battling the flames. The photograph shows the bushfire closing in on the small town of Spencer, bordering the Durrug National Park north of Sydney (AFP photo)

Sarajevo shelled ahead of peace talks

SARAJEVO (R) — A huge explosion shook Sarajevo Tuesday as hillside gunners shelled the besieged Bosnian capital hours before Croatian-Muslim peace talks began in Vienna.

One person was killed and at least ten wounded in shelling, which forced people to run for cover in the debris.

A police station in the city centre took a direct hit and a huge fireball blasted its roof off, filling the street with twisted metal. Local reporters believed it was hit by a rocket.

The bombardment started just hours before Croatian and Bosnian ministers met in Vienna to try to stop fighting between Muslims and Croats in central Bosnia.

It was the first round of Bosnian peace negotiations of 1994. Talks including the third warring faction, the Serbs, are set for Geneva in two weeks time.

Sarajevo had already been bombed Monday, when a total of 14 people died and a single shell wiped out an entire family of six, the United Nations reported Tuesday.

Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic and Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic were meeting in Vienna's imperial Hofburg Palace, beginning a crucial period for prospects of ending the Bosnia conflict.

International mediator Lord

Owen suggested that United Nations troops in Bosnia could be withdrawn in the spring if peace talks make no progress in the next two months.

The new round coincides with the beginning of Greece's six-month presidency of the European Union, giving rise to speculation that Athens, as a traditional ally of Serbia, will pull out the stops to broker a breakthrough agreement.

"We have to solve this problem before the spring. Otherwise the belligerents will try new military operations," Greek European Affairs Minister Theodoros Pangalos was quoted as saying.

Lord Owen told British radio the United Nations could not justify pulling out during the harsh Balkan winter as this would cause enormous suffering to ordinary civilians. But he said U.N. food was frequently channelled to fighters on all three sides.

"We are changing the balance of the war and in a way keeping it going but we can justify keeping it going as long as there is a real chance that the political and military leaders are taking the peace process seriously," he said.

"If they're really just using the peace process as a shelter behind which they continue the war, come the end of the winter I think people will have to reassess the role of the U.N. forces."

In Brussels, the Defence Ministry said the commander of U.N. forces in Bosnia, General Francis Briguemont, may leave his post early and return to Belgium.

Gen. Briguemont, an outspoken critic of political efforts to end the fighting in Bosnia, had been scheduled to leave in July but a ministry spokesman said the general had asked in December to return early.

In Sarajevo, the U.N. said the United States was about to double the number of planes dropping relief supplies over Bosnia.

"The military aid capability over Bosnia will be expanded considerably in the near future," said Ray Wilkinson, spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

"Within the next few days the number of aircraft will be increased (from eight) to 17. These will be mainly American, although the French and Germany are considering raising their contributions."

Of the eight aircraft already flying nightly airdrop missions, six are American C-130s, France and Germany have each contributed one aircraft each.

Airdrops of relief supplies over Bosnia started in March 1993 as United Nations relief efforts by land were stymied in some Muslim enclaves threatened by Serb forces.

Yeltsin invites Kravchuk to join summit

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has invited his Ukrainian counterpart, Leonid Kravchuk, to Moscow to take part in summit talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton.

Interfax news agency said Tuesday quoting Foreign Ministry sources.

Officials in Kiev confirmed the invitation had been extended but declined to comment on whether it would be accepted or not.

Interfax, quoting a senior-ranking Russian diplomat, said it was at present "difficult" to say if there would be a trilateral summit in Moscow, noting it would depend on Mr. Kravchuk's response to the invitation.

"The idea of his (Kravchuk's) presence in Moscow is to confirm all engagements, without exception, of which is a part," the diplomat said, referring specifically to the 1991 START treaty and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

The Ukrainian president has been seeking a face-to-face meeting with Mr. Clinton for some months, but Ukraine's delay in ratifying START prompted the cancellation of two planned Kravchuk trips to Washington.

U.S. officials who travelled to Kiev to Secretary of State Warren Christopher last October made it clear that Mr.

Clinton would not go to Kiev and Mr. Kravchuk would not be invited to Washington until Ukraine's position on its nuclear missiles was clarified.

But a Ukrainian official suggested Monday that Mr. Kravchuk could travel to Minsk, where Mr. Clinton is due to meet Belarus leader Stanislav Shushkevich on Jan. 15 following his summit talks in Moscow.

Interfax news agency in Ukraine Monday also quoted an informed source as saying that Mr. Kravchuk could meet Mr. Clinton on Jan. 14 to sign an agreement on "basic questions of nuclear disarmament."

Hosokawa attempts to calm fears about his future

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, attempting to calm jittery about his tenuous hold on power, said Tuesday he has no plans to call snap elections or resign if he fails a crucial leadership test this month.

Mr. Hosokawa political future could lie in tatters in four weeks' time if he fails to pass through parliament his package of long-promised political bills, including anti-corruption laws and plans to revamp the electoral system.

"I'm not thinking at all of dissolving parliament (for snap elections) or resigning along with my cabinet," Mr. Hosokawa said, attempting to quash speculation about his uncertain future.

"I will put all my effort into passing the reform bills," he said in a televised news conference.

Mr. Hosokawa, looking relaxed after a week's holiday, met reporters after calling on the Ise Shrine in western Japan, a popular New Year's destination for leaders seeking good fortune.

Mr. Hosokawa was swept to power last August on promises he would clean up politics in the wake of numerous pay-off scandals involving mostly politicians of the long-dominant Liberal Democratic

Party (LDP), now the main opposition.

But the LDP, still fuming over losing its 38-year grip on power in July general elections, delayed passage of the reform bills and forced the eight-group ruling coalition to extend the parliamentary session by 45 days until the end of January.

"If he fails on reform a second time, Hosokawa will come under a lot of pressure from the media, the opposition and even his own coalition to resign and/or call elections," said columnist Reiko Tamura.

"But I think he has a good chance of succeeding because no-one wants more political and economic instability," she said. "Elections would hamper any improvement in the economy."

In parliament Tuesday, coalition party representatives agreed to re-open debate on political reform in the upper house the next day, with or without the LDP's participation. They said they hoped to win final approval of the bills, which have already cleared the lower house, by mid-January.

Criticism is growing over Mr. Hosokawa's foot-dragging on drafting effective measures to revive the stagnant economy.

The latest poll Tuesday showed that while 66 per cent of the presidents of Japan's leading 100 firms supported Mr. Hosokawa, 84 per cent were unhappy with his performance on the economy.

At his news conference, Mr. Hosokawa attempted to sidestep the issue of what his government would do to boost the economy, now in its worst downturn in two decades.

Although he said late last year he wanted to cut income taxes to help bolster the economy, he has yet to unveil details such as the timing and scale of tax cuts.

"I want to think about it after receiving the recommendations of a government and ruling coalition liaison group on the economy in the middle of the month," he said.

Mr. Hosokawa has been forced to delay a decision in order to win over the Socialists and other alliance partners who oppose a plan to balance the tax cuts with a hike in the consumption or sales tax, now at three per cent.

Meanwhile, five lawmakers who defected from Japan's main opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) formed a small parliamentary group Tuesday to support, but not join, Mr. Hosokawa's

Sinn Fein revives N. Ireland peace hopes

DUBLIN (R) — The leader of the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein has given a guarded welcome to an Anglo-Irish peace plan for Northern Ireland in a landmark speech that may revive its chances of success.

Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, told supporters that a Dec. 15 declaration by British Prime Minister John Major and Irish Premier Albert Reynolds had for the first time recognised the right of all Irish people to shape their future.

"The deadlock has not yet been broken, but the key issue of national self-determination has at least been identified," he told activists in predominantly Catholic West Belfast.

It was the first time Mr. Adams had said anything positive about the declaration, which sets out principles to end 25 years of war by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against British rule of the province.

Since the declaration was unveiled, Sinn Fein has been critical because it fails to acknowledge that Ireland should be united to include the North, which stayed under British rule when the island was partitioned 70 years ago.

Hardline statements by Sinn Fein over the weekend together with a surge of IRA violence and signs of a new campaign by Protestant extremists raised fears the peace package may be close to collapse.

Mr. Adams' speech was heavily qualified, but its tone contrasted sharply with the dismissive note both he and fellow leader Martin McGuinness have struck in recent days.

The two men have said it will be weeks before Sinn Fein gives its formal response to the declaration and have called in vain for direct talks with London and Dublin, who have replied that there can be no discussions until the IRA ends its war.

A spokesman for Mr. Major said Mr. Adams' comments would be examined. "We will study Mr. Adams' words very carefully but what the people of Northern Ireland need is a sign from the terrorists that there will be a permanent cessation of their violence."

Mr. Adams welcomed the fact that the declaration says the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland should have a say in the future of their island — national self-determination.

But he made clear that Republicans object to the way the declaration gives the 60-40 Protestant majority in Northern Ireland a veto over any moves to change their British status.

Most so-called loyalist politicians in Unionist parties which want to maintain 300-year-old links with Britain have grudgingly welcomed the plan because it enshrines their right to block unification.

Mr. Adams warned that unless this was changed, violence between the IRA and security forces as well as attacks by Protestant gunmen on the Catholic minority would continue.

Japanese see less need to marry — paper

TOKYO (R) — An increasing number of Japanese believe women need not marry, according to a poll by the daily Mainichi Shimbun. About 28 per cent of respondents thought women should not have to marry if they were economically independent, while 58 per cent said women should marry, the daily said Tuesday.

In a 1987 government poll, 74 per cent of Japanese said marriage was necessary and 21 per cent said it was not. "This change in attitude gives a sense of foreboding, of the destruction of a society in which marriage is the norm, and takes (Japan) a step further toward a society of fewer children," the newspaper said.

The Mainichi poll, taken in December in cooperation with a life insurance company, covered 2,526 adults nationwide. A record low 1.21 million babies were born in Japan in 1992, down by about 14,000 from 1991. The average number of children born to a Japanese woman in her lifetime fell to a post-war low of 1.5 in 1992.

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Death toll in Mexican uprising hits 86

MEXICO CITY (Agencies) — The official death toll after three days of fighting between government forces and Indian insurgents in southeastern Mexico has risen to at least 86, as rebel forces appear to have been routed from most of the towns they held.

According to the latest official casualty count released here late Monday by the National Defence Ministry, at least 86 people have been killed; 51 rebels and seven soldiers outside San Cristobal de Las Casas, and in Ocosingo alone.

San Cristobal and five nearby towns were taken over in a New Year's Day offensive launched by the so-called Zapatista National Liberation Army to draw attention to the impoverished southeastern Chiapas state and alleged government repression of indigenous people there.

Chiapas state authorities reported that the army had routed the Zapatistas from all the locations they occupied, except in Altamirano, which a top official said was still in rebel hands.

They said rebel forces had been expelled from Ocosingo, although local residents still reported heavy fighting late Monday.

All access routes to the state capital of Tuxtla Gutierrez were under army surveillance amid rumours that Zapatista rebels were nearby, a Chiapas official said.

Local officials also reported that the military had arrested 12 people in Tuxtla who were apparently implicated in the kidnapping earlier Monday of the former Chiapas Governor Abasalon Castellanos.

Besides the official death toll of 86, military authorities said that 27 Zapatistas were killed in Ocosingo, while press reports spoke of some 60 people in more than 30 hours of fighting.

Chiapas state officials said that 21 local police officers and seven civilians had been killed since Jan. 1 in San Cristobal, Altamirano, Chimal and Las Margaritas, and that 30 people were wounded, one of them a journalist.

Press reports indicated that more than 100 people had perished in the uprising.

Chiapas Governor Elman Zetzer, in a public address, called for people "not to give in to panic and rumours," and

to assist the armed forces in their operations throughout the state.

Also in his first public comment on the insurrection, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari Monday denounced the violence in Chiapas state and called for dialogue.

"In Mexico we will always seek the rule of law, peaceful dialogue, and in particular the defence of human rights," Mr. De Gortari said in a statement issued in here. "Violent acts delay a real solution to social needs."

The armed peasants apparently have links to Guatemalan leftist rebels and other Central American groups, a senior Mexican official said.

The senior official made his remarks in response to questions about statements made earlier Monday by Guatemalan officials who said Guatemalan rebels may be working with the Zapatistas.

"There are many signs of Central American elements and armed groups, mainly Guatemalans, but no links to any specific groups or organisations," said the senior official.

Officials reported bodies strewn over a radius of three kilometres. All those aboard — nine crew members and 111 passengers — were killed.

TASS, quoting unofficial sources, said Tuesday there had been four more passengers on the plane, who had not been included in the passenger list.

Crew members often smuggle unlisted passengers on overbooked planes to make extra money. The TASS information, if confirmed, would raise the death toll to 124 on board the plane.

Mr. Kamensky said the body of one farmer was found near the blazing craft.

ITAR-TASS news agency said 100 cattle had been killed,

97 bodies found after Russian plane crash

MOSCOW (R) — Russian rescuers working through the debris of a passenger plane which crashed Monday killing at least 120 people had pieced together 97 bodies for identification by Tuesday, a local official said.

"You cannot call some of them bodies in the full sense of the word as we have had to put together pieces blown apart," Alexander Kamensky, head of the Irkutsk Civil Defence Service, told Reuters by telephone.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PLO representative in Riyadh dies

RIYADH (AP) — Subhi Abu Karash, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) representative to Saudi Arabia, died Tuesday of a brain clot. He was 58. Officials at Riyadh's military hospital said he had been in hospital for four months for treatment of brain cancer and died there at dawn. Mr. Abu Karash is survived by a wife, three sons and three daughters. In Tunis, PLO officials said Mr. Abu Karash was born in Gaza. He joined Fatah, the PLO's mainstream guerrilla movement in 1963. He fled with his family to Egypt when Israel seized Gaza and the West Bank in the 1967 war.

Israel to build new Tel Aviv airport

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel aims to build a new Tel Aviv airport to serve as a crossroads to Asia and Africa in a peaceful Middle East before the turn of the century, transport officials said Tuesday. The transport ministry said "Ben Gurion-2000," to be built in the shape of the star of David taken from the Israeli flag, would quadruple air traffic through Tel Aviv to a capacity of 16 million passengers per year. The government is to approve the project to replace the current terminal by 1998, at a cost of \$850 million, within the next two weeks, it said.

Bhutto's brother refused parole

KARACHI (AFP) — Murtaza Bhutto, jailed brother of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was refused permission Wednesday to visit his father's grave in northern Larkana. A special court rejected his plea for a parole. The judge decided his application had "no merit," court sources said. Murtaza had asked to be allowed to attend celebrations marking the 66th anniversary of the birth of his father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who was hanged by the military authorities in 1979. Murtaza has been in jail since early November on charges of terrorism and subversion which carry the death penalty.

Israelis 'proud' to be Jewish — poll

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Nine out of every 10 Israelis are "proud or happy" to be Jewish and almost 70 per cent believe they are God's "chosen people" according to a poll published Tuesday. The Israel Institute of Applied Social Research found in a poll that 94 per cent felt proud of their Jewishness and 76 per cent were opposed to their children marrying gentiles. Some 68 per cent of 2,399 people questioned believed the Jews were chosen while 31 per cent had doubts or did not believe it. However, 77 per cent said they believed in God, 73 per cent were convinced Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and 53 per cent believe the Messiah will come. More than nine out of 10 have their sons circumcised and 71 per cent refuse to eat food banned by Judaism, such as pork and seafood. Sixty-eight per cent believe Israel could not survive without the support of diaspora Jews, but more 50 per cent described themselves as "different" from Jews living abroad. The poll also found that 59 per cent had a negative or very negative "attitude" towards Arabs, over 41 per cent who responded positively.

India, UAE to discuss extradition treaty

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Experts from India and the United Arab Emirates will meet soon in Abu Dhabi to discuss a comprehensive extradition treaty, officials said here Tuesday. The proposed treaty is crucial for India, which has been seeking the deportation from the UAE of gangsters suspected of involvement in last year's Bombay bomb blasts. The suspects included Dawood Ibrahim, who is accused of running an organised crime syndicate in Bombay from a safe haven in Dubai. Officials attending a three-day joint commission conference which began here Tuesday said technical experts will meet soon in Abu Dhabi to scrutinise draft extradition treaties and hammer out an agreement.

Japan envisions bridge link to Russia

TOKYO (AFP) — A Japanese transport firm has drawn up plans to build a spectacular pair of bridges that would link Japan with Russia — a mammoth project that would take 10 years to complete. Takashi Miyamoto, president of Juro Container Transport Inc., said a first bridge, 43 kilometres long, would link Japan's northern island of Hokkaido with Russian-held Sakhalin Island. A second, seven-kilometre span would extend from Sakhalin to the Russian mainland. Mr. Miyamoto to Tokyo's mainichi newspaper in a report that appeared Tuesday. Mr. Miyamoto said his Yokohama-based company has already held preliminary technical talks on the road-and-rail venture — budgeted at 7.5 billion yen (\$66 billion) — with Russia's railways ministry. Though the cost would be high, the benefits would be enormous and would give Japan a sure link to Russia's natural gas resources.

Hurd calls for quick return to self-rule talks

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd underlined Tuesday the urgency of resuming the stalled Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) negotiations on Palestinian autonomy and warned public confidence would be lost.

"I think it's important to keep up the impetus," Mr. Hurd told a press conference after meetings with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and a delegation of Palestinian leaders.

"That's why I hope that discussions on the points which are difficult will start again as soon as possible."

"Unless people here in Israel and the occupied territories can see there is actual progress they will lose trust in the whole process," he warned.

Israel has refused to resume negotiations in Egypt on how to implement the September 18 autonomy deal unless the Palestinians accept as the starting point a draft document drawn up last Wednesday.

However, Mr. Hurd voiced optimism on a successful im-

plementation of the self-rule deal.

"Those concerned have an instinct to move forward rather than back. Therefore I hope and believe that those concerned will find a way forward," Mr. Hurd said.

Britain was not playing an intermediary role, the foreign secretary said but he offered help for the peace process if needed.

"Anything we can do to help it forward whether by technical assistance... or whether by encouraging those taking part in the negotiations we will gladly do that."

Mr. Hurd, who arrived overnight from Beirut for a 48-hour trip, said: "I wouldn't see myself in any kind of role of intermediary. Maybe, from time to time, we can facilitate understandings."

The secretary said he would announce new British assistance to the Palestinians during a visit to the Gaza Strip on Wednesday when he also meets President Ezer Weizman before heading for Amman.

Britain is also offering to train Palestinian police commanders, as well as help organise elections and set up a radio station.

Toll tops 100 from Venezuelan jail riot

MARACAIBO, Venezuela (Agencies) — Officials pulled the charred bodies of mutilated inmates from burned-out cellblocks Tuesday, and prisoners shouted the names of those slain in Venezuela's worst prison riot to relatives outside.

The confirmed death toll rose to 103 Tuesday, according to Colonel Aldo Boccone of the national guard unit that quelled Monday's riot in this western oil city.

"It's the worst slaughter I've ever seen," Mr. Boccone said. "It's barbaric."

At least 45 inmates were wounded in the melee, which an official said started when Indian prisoners at the Maracaibo national jail retaliated against non-Indians for several killings last week.

Frenzied fighting with guns and homemade knives ended after several hours when two cellblocks were set afire and hundreds of national guardsmen stormed the prison, located about 700 kilometres west of the capital, Caracas.

Many corpses were so badly burned that only 54 had been identified by Tuesday morning, according to Maracaibo criminal court Judge Salvador Cubillan. Some had been mutilated. All of the dead were believed to be inmates, officials said.

"Apparently, a group of prisoners attacked others," pathologist Nelson Bonilla said. "They mutilated them, butchered them with knives, hanged them, cut their heads off... some of the remains are only fragments."

"We fear there are more cadavers in the tunnels and water tanks," Judge Cubillan told reporters. "We have identified 54. It is difficult to identify the rest because they are disfigured. Others are simply charred pieces of meat."

Frantic civilians waited outside the packed morgue and prison on the outskirts of the city for news about whether their family members were among the dead.

In six months alone last year, 26 inmates were killed and another 72 were injured at the prison. Officials regularly seize knives and firearms from inmates.

The justice minister, Fernán Marmol Leon, was scheduled to fly to Maracaibo from Caracas, to investigate.

Fighting first broke out Sunday while families were meeting with prisoners, and one of the inmates was shot to death. Authorities said the prisoners were fighting amongst themselves for control inside the facility, and inmates themselves set the fires in three cellblocks, said patrol chief Eduardo Villalobos.

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A young Palestinian girl poses with wrecked cars used as barricades during a general strike Tuesday in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Doctors appeal for drugs as Afghan rivals fight on

KABUL (Agencies) — Doctors in the Afghan capital appealed for medicine and blood Tuesday to treat 1,700 people wounded in four days of fighting among rival factions.

"We are short of medicine and blood. We don't even have enough food to feed the patients," said Zafar, a Health Ministry official. Like most Afghans, he uses only one name.

In Jamhuriat hospital, one of Kabul's largest, dozens of children with shrapnel wounds lay bleeding in corridors and on makeshift stretchers.

Since New Year's Day, fighters have attacked the city with rockets and long-range missiles in some of the heaviest fighting since they ousted the communist regime in 1992 and turned their guns on each other.

At least 80 people have been killed, Dr. Zafar said the toll was probably much higher because most people bury their dead immediately in line with Muslim tradition.

President Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamiat-Islami party holds most strategic sites in Kabul, despite attacks by his main rivals, Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Rashid Dostum, a former army general.

Mr. Rabbani arrested 15 of Gen. Dostum's soldiers Tuesday, including three generals. "When we were arrested there was heavy shelling and a lot of firing," said Gen. Burat Ali as he was led away by government soldiers.

Earlier Tuesday, rockets pounded the capital at a peak rate of six per minute. Witnesses said the worst fighting was in the south-eastern Mirocoran district where Gen. Dostum's fighters were surrounded by the government troops.

The situation in the district is terrible — there is no water, no electricity, while the closure of bakeries for the past four days has left an extreme shortage of bread, a resident there said.

"Many wounded lost their lives due to lack of medicines, bandages and plasma," the resident said, and casualties could not be evacuated.

Thousands of refugees, laden with belongings were fleeing the south of the city for safer havens in the quieter north and northwestern suburbs. Hundreds were shelter-

ing in the basement of the main military hospital.

The Iranian embassy offered to negotiate a peace settlement, and a mission of leaders of moderate factions in the coalition government was also trying to mediate an end to the bloody battles.

"We can accept a whole kind of peace settlement for the people of Afghanistan," Minister of National Security General Fahim said.

Huge columns of black smoke towered above Bala Hissar and the airport, where Mr. Rabbani's men were trying to mop up pockets of resistance in their battle for control of Gen. Dostum's main lifeline to the airport.

The front line along the main runway of the airport, held by Gen. Dostum's forces since the ex-communist general defected to the guerrillas, toppling the former communist government in April 1992, he said.

The fighting had intensified in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif that is Dostum's base, and Gen. Fahim said forces loyal to Mr. Rabbani had taken the airport. One hospital alone reported 70 injured by Monday in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Britain expels Sudanese envoy

LONDON (Agencies) — The Foreign Office Tuesday gave the Sudanese ambassador 14 days to leave Britain after Sudan refused to change its decision to expel the British envoy from Sudan.

A Foreign Office spokesman said the decision to expel Ali Osman Yassin was an "inevitable consequence" of Sudan's decision to expel British Ambassador Peter Streams.

Sudan ordered Mr. Streams out of the country after Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey refused to visit the capital, Khartoum, as a guest of the government of President Omar Hassan Al Bashir.

The government had insisted Archbishop Carey travel as its guest in the mainly Muslim northern Sudan. The cleric had said he cancelled the Khartoum leg of his trip because he was not avowed freedom of movement.

Foreign office Minister Mark Lennox-Boyd summoned the Sudanese charge d'affaires, Abdul Rahman Bakit, to the Foreign Office Tuesday morning, said the Foreign Office spokesman.

Mr. Lennox-Boyd told the charge because of the totally inadequate response to our questions on Friday when we last had the Sudanese charge in... because of that we had no alternative but to expel the Sudanese ambassador to London," the spokesman said.

There are 17 diplomatic staff at Sudan's embassy in London, including the ambassador. Britain has seven diplomatic staff, including Mr. Streams, in Khartoum.

The Foreign Office spokesman said Britain would continue to maintain its embassy in Khartoum.

Speaking in Israel on Tuesday, Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said that the expulsion of Sudan's ambassador was "the end of the episode as far as we are concerned."

"I hope that is the end of diplomatic exchanges on this," he said. "It was a necessary response to an unjustified act."

Britain would not agree to the appointment of a successor to Mr. Yassin and there were no plans to choose a replacement for Mr. Streams, the Foreign Office said.

Mr. Streams, who was holidaying in England when Khartoum announced its decision, did "not serve the interests of the two countries," a Sudanese Foreign Ministry statement said.

Archbishop Carey visited southern Sudan last week at the invitation of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, as the followers of the Anglican faith there call themselves.

Pakistani condition irks India

NEW DELHI (AP) — India warned Tuesday that its plans to send peace proposals to arch-rival Pakistan would depend on Islamabad agreeing to hold negotiations within a certain time-frame.

Foreign Secretary Jyotindra Nath Dixit, in his first statement after returning Monday from Islamabad, said India's plans to send proposals to improve bilateral ties would depend on Pakistan's stand on future talks.

Mr. Dixit's reaction was to Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shaharyar Mohammad Khan's statement that further talks between diplomats of the two nations would hinge on the "ground situation" in India's troubled Kashmir state.

"I said that in four to six weeks we would send proposals on Sir Creek, and on redeployment, but now we will have to see," Mr. Dixit said of Khan's statement broadcast by Pakistan's state television after the India talk.

"We will now watch the ground situation before sending the proposals," the Indian diplomat stressed.

The foreign secretaries of the two Asian rivals met in

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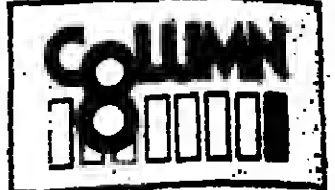
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France to ban post-menopause insemination

PARIS (R) — The French government will ask parliament to ban medical techniques being used to help women give birth past child-bearing age, Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said Monday.

A bill to be put to parliament "will state very clearly that medically-assisted procreation techniques, particularly in vitro insemination, will be reserved for women of childbearing age — that is, before menopause," he said.

Mr. Douste-Blazy, a doctor, said helping women to bear children after menopause was dangerous both for the mother and the child. Controversy over the ethics of genetic engineering flared last month when a 59-year-old British woman gave birth to twins following artificial insemination at a Rome clinic.

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